Joe Benitez's
Vol. 4
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Lady Mechanika
The Clockwork Assassin

THE COMPLETE
VOLUME FOUR
FOURTH VOLUME

LADY MECHANIKA™
THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

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Originally published in single magazine form as LADY MECHANIKA: THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN #1-3 by Benitez Productions.

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Published by Benitez Productions,
P.O. Box 16101, Encino, CA 91416

DIGITAL COPY

ALSO AVAILABLE IN PRINT
ISBN: 978-0-9966030-9-6

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JOE BENITEZ'S

Lady Mechanika

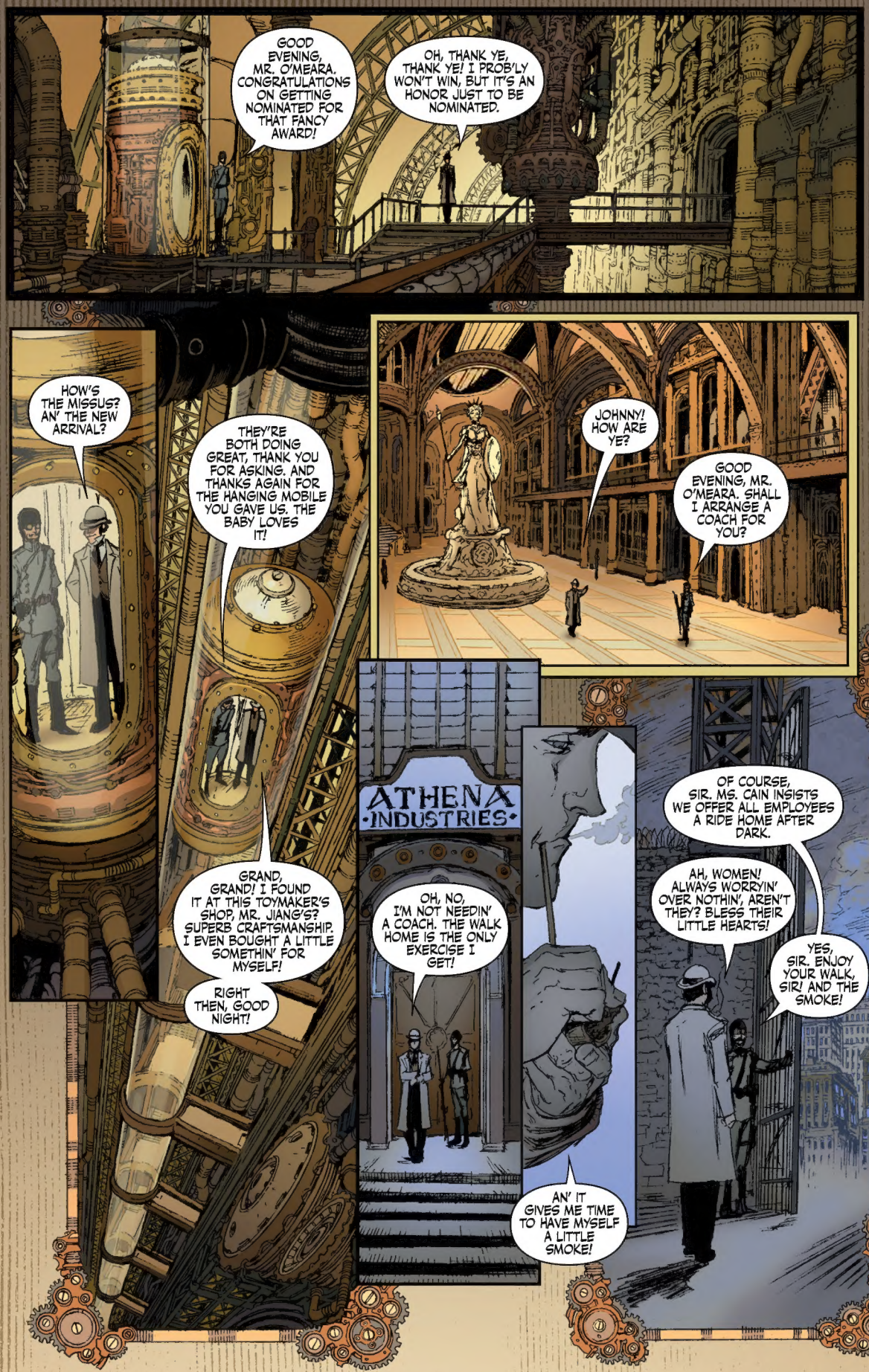
in

The CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN

LADY MECHANIKA CREATED BY JOE BENITEZ

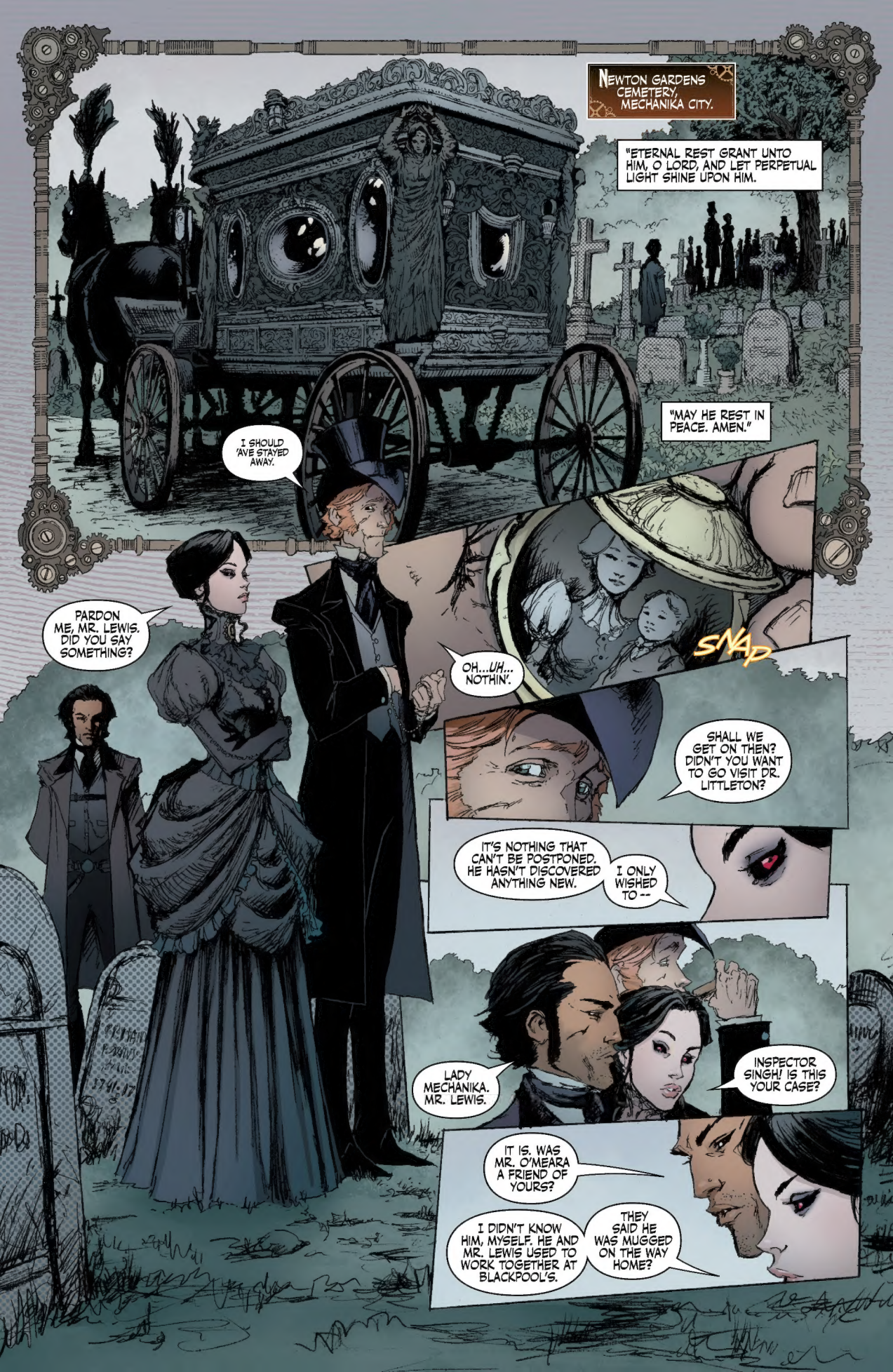
Chapter One

ATHENA INDUSTRIES, MECHANIKA CITY.
YAROMIR! YE'LL NEVER GUESS WHO I CHANCED UPON TODAY! I WAS AT...AY! ARE YE STILL FIDDLIN' WITH THAT?
PUT IT AWAY AN' TRY AGAIN TOMORROW! REMEMBER HOW AL WOULD ALWAYS GO HOME WITH A PROBLEM AN' COME BACK WITH SOME INGENIOUS SOLUTION IN THE MORNIN'?
EH... HE HAD WIFE AT HOME TO TALK TO. SHE MADE GENIUS SOLUTIONS!
YE COULD FIND YE'SELF A WIFE TOO IF YE WEREN'T HERE WORKIN' LATE EVERY NIGHT! ALTHOUGH THE SAME COULD BE SAID FOR ME TOO, AY? HA!
WELL, HAVE A GOOD NIGHT THEN, AN' I'LL SEE YE IN THE MORNIN'!


GOOD EVENING, MR. O'MEARA. CONGRATULATIONS ON GETTING NOMINATED FOR THAT FANCY AWARD!
OH, THANK YE, THANK YE! I PROB'LY WON'T WIN, BUT IT'S AN HONOR JUST TO BE NOMINATED.
HOW'S THE MISSUS? AN' THE NEW ARRIVAL?
THEY'RE BOTH DOING GREAT, THANK YOU FOR ASKING. AND THANKS AGAIN FOR THE HANGING MOBILE YOU GAVE US. THE BABY LOVES IT!
GRAND, GRAND! I FOUND IT AT THIS TOYMAKER'S SHOP, MR. JIANG'S? SUPERB CRAFTSMANSHIP. I EVEN BOUGHT A LITTLE SOMETHIN' FOR MYSELF!
RIGHT THEN, GOOD NIGHT!
JOHNNY! HOW ARE YE?
GOOD EVENING, MR. O'MEARA. SHALL I ARRANGE A COACH FOR YOU?
ATHENA INDUSTRIES
OH, NO, I'M NOT NEEDIN' A COACH. THE WALK HOME IS THE ONLY EXERCISE I GET!
AN' IT GIVES ME TIME TO HAVE MYSELF A LITTLE SMOKE!
OF COURSE, SIR. MS. CAIN INSISTS WE OFFER ALL EMPLOYEES A RIDE HOME AFTER DARK.
AH, WOMEN! ALWAYS WORRYIN' OVER NOTHIN', AREN'T THEY? BLESS THEIR LITTLE HEARTS!
YES, SIR. ENJOY YOUR WALK, SIR! AND THE SMOKE!

ATHENA INDUSTRIES
♪♫♪ ♫♪♫
♪MUSHA RING DUMMA DO DAMMA DA♪
♪WHACK FOR MY DADDY OH...♪
CLK CLK CLK
EVENIN', MADAM.
SHINK

SWOOSH
THUD
THUNK
GLINT
CLK CLK CLK


NEWTON GARDENS CEMETERY, MECHANIKA CITY.
"ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO HIM, O LORD, AND LET PERPETUAL LIGHT SHINE UPON HIM.
"MAY HE REST IN PEACE. AMEN."
I SHOULD 'AVE STAYED AWAY.
PARDON ME, MR. LEWIS. DID YOU SAY SOMETHING?
SNAP
OH...UH... NOTHIN'.
SHALL WE GET ON THEN? DIDN'T YOU WANT TO GO VISIT DR. LITTLETON?
IT'S NOTHING THAT CAN'T BE POSTPONED. HE HASN'T DISCOVERED ANYTHING NEW.
I ONLY WISHED TO --
LADY MECHANIKA. MR. LEWIS.
INSPECTOR SINGH! IS THIS YOUR CASE?
IT IS. WAS MR. O'MEARA A FRIEND OF YOURS?
I DIDN'T KNOW HIM, MYSELF. HE AND MR. LEWIS USED TO WORK TOGETHER AT BLACKPOOL'S.
THEY SAID HE WAS MUGGED ON THE WAY HOME?

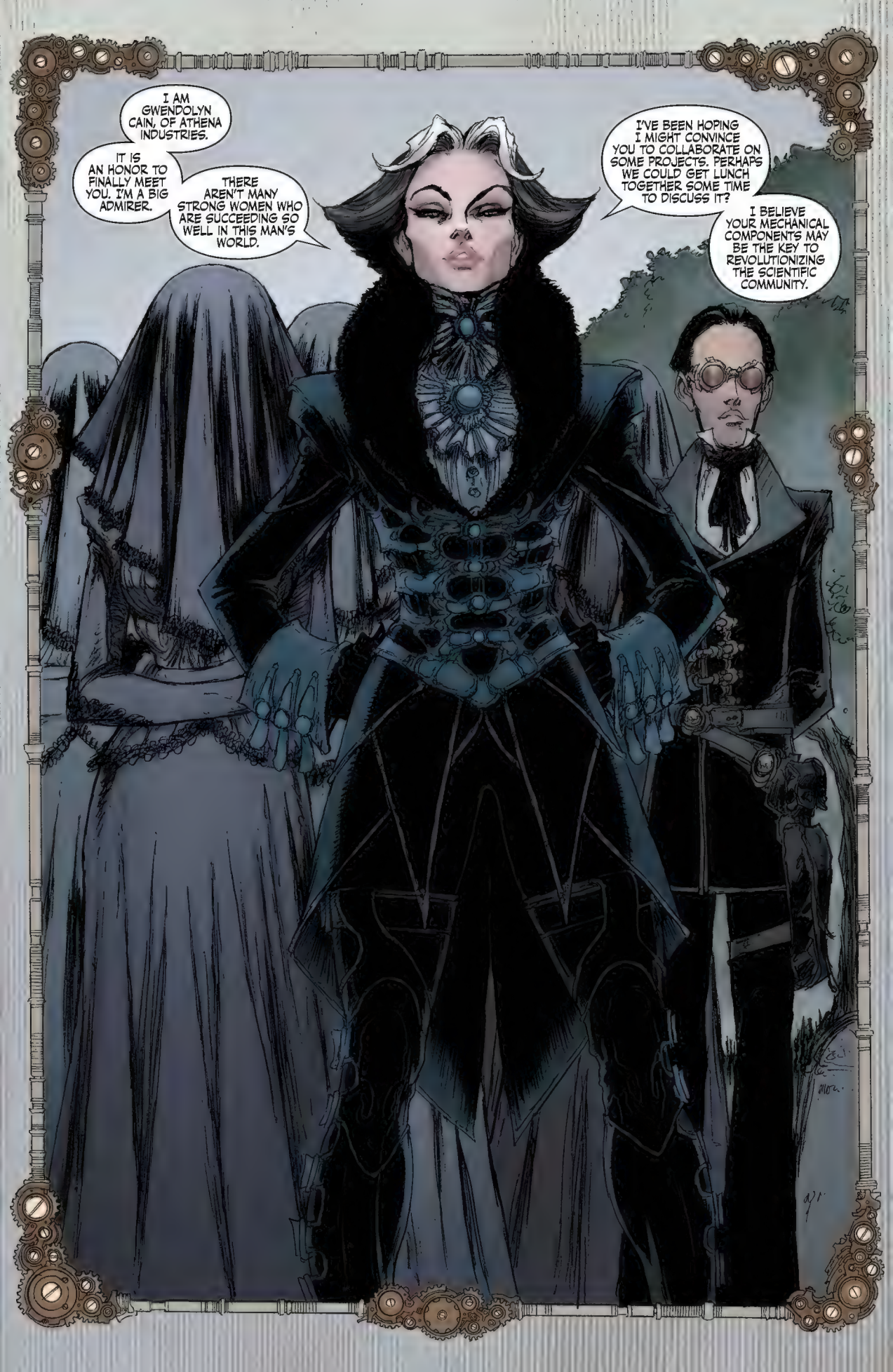
HE WAS KILLED WHILE WALKING HOME, YES. BUT IT WAS NO SIMPLE MUGGING.
THE MAN WAS SLICED IN HALF, AND THROUGH THE PELVIC BONE, IN ONE CLEAN STROKE.
SLICED IN HALF! WHO ON EARTH COULD DO SUCH A THING?
WELL, YOU COULD DO IT, I PRESUME.
AM I A SUSPECT, INSPECTOR?
I WAS MERELY SUGGESTING THAT IT'S UNLIKELY ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE THE STRENGTH TO DO IT, NOT WITHOUT SOME KIND OF MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE.
INDEED. I'M STARTING WITH HIS CO-WORKERS, HIS EMPLOYER AND COMPETITORS.
I'M AFRAID YOU'LL HAVE NO LACK OF SUSPECTS THEN, IN A CITY KNOWN FOR ITS TINKERERS AND INVENTORS.
YOU USED TO WORK WITH HIM, MR. LEWIS?
WHA... *HUH?* OH, YES. A LONG, LONG TIME AGO...
ARCHIE?

ARCHIBALD C. LEWIS! IT IS YOU! YOU LOOK GOOD, MON AMI! IT'S BEEN MUCH TOO LONG. NO ONE HAS SEEN OR HEARD FROM YOU IN YEARS!
PHILIPPE... I'M SORRY, I... I COULDN'T...I DIDN'T WANT TO...
WE UNDERSTOOD, ARCHIE. IT WAS A DIFFICULT TIME.
IT WAS GOOD OF YOU TO COME TODAY. FOR BENEN.
YAROMIR! COME, LOOK WHO'S HERE!
WHA... WHO?
MR. LEWIS! IS THAT YOU?
I ALWAYS SAY, YOU ONE OF OUR MOST BRIGHTEST ENGINEERS! IT IS GOOD TO SEE YOU AGAIN NOW!
I...I JUST WANTED TO COME AND... AND PAY MY RESPECTS.
OF COURSE, OF COURSE. IT IS ALL VERY SAD. WE SHOULD NOT WAIT FOR TRAGEDY TO BRING US TOGETHER.
NO. IT WAS WRONG O' ME TO STAY AWAY. I LOST SOME VERY GOOD FRIENDS.
YOU HAVEN'T LOST US, MON AMI. WE'RE STILL HERE AND WE ALWAYS WILL BE. WHENEVER YOU ARE READY.
HEY, LOOK! THE OLD GANG'S ALL HERE! WELL, WITH THE OBVIOUS EXCEPTIONS, HEHEH, AM I RIGHT?
PRECIOUS, THESE FINE GENTLEMEN USED TO WORK WITH ME WAY BACK IN MY EARLY YEARS AT BLACKPOOL. IT'S JUST NOT THE SAME THERE ANYMORE WITHOUT YOU FELLAS!
I'M HEAD OF MY OWN DEPARTMENT NOW, WHO WOULD HAVE GUESSED IT, AM I RIGHT? HEH! ANYWAY, WE'RE DOING GREAT. REALLY GREAT.
MY IDEA FOR A HIGH-ENERGY LIGHT OSCILLATOR CANNON IS JUST ABOUT READY TO GO ON THE MARKET. ONE OF MY PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENTS, I MUST SAY.

HARRY, I'M BORED. YOU SAID YOU'D TAKE ME SHOPPING!
YEAH, YEAH, SUGAR PIE. GO ON AHEAD AND GRAB A COACH. I'LL BE RIGHT THERE.
ISN'T SHE A PEACH?
MY WIFE AND I ARE STILL HAPPILY MARRIED, YOU'LL WANT TO KNOW. SHE'S OUT IN THE COUNTRY TAKING CARE OF THE KIDS.
I'VE GOT THREE BOYS AND A LITTLE GIRL NOW, AND A COUNTRY HOUSE, CAN YOU BELIEVE IT? IT USED TO BELONG TO AN EARL, SO I'M PRACTICALLY A LORD NOW, AM I RIGHT? ME, HAROLD JOHNSON FROM LONG ISLAND!
AND AS FOR PRECIOUS HERE, WELL, WHAT MY WIFE DOESN'T KNOW WON'T HURT HER, AM I RIGHT? AM I RIGHT? *HEH HEH!*
ANYWAY, GREAT CATCHING UP WITH YOU GUYS! I'LL SEE YOU AT THE WAKE TONIGHT! CHEERIO AND TA TA!
AMERICANS. A PITY LIVING HERE FOR SO MANY YEARS HASN'T IMPROVED HIS MANNERS ANY. HE'S STILL THE BIGGEST *CONNARD* AROUND.
HIGH-ENERGY LIGHT OSCILLATOR? WAS THAT NOT YOUR IDEA, MR. LEWIS?

OH IT'S NOT IMPOR'ANT...
YES, YES IT WAS! I REMEMBER YOU TALKING TO WALTER ABOUT IT.
THAT HARRY, HE WAS ALWAYS TAKING CREDIT FOR OTHER PEOPLE'S WORK. SOME THINGS NEVER CHANGE.
MR. DUVAL?
MILENA, *MA CHÈRE!* HOW ARE YOU? I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN AGES!
YOU REMEMBER YAROMIR AND ARCHIBALD?
OF COURSE.
MR. KOVALYAV...AND MR. LEWIS...
I...I'M SORRY, MILENA. I SHOULD 'AVE LOOKED OUT FOR YOU AND THE CHILDREN AFTER...AFTER ALBRECHT...
YOU HAD YOUR OWN GRIEF, MR. LEWIS. I AM JUST HAPPY YOU LEFT BLACKPOOL AND THAT LINE OF WORK.
I ALWAYS TOLD ALBIE WORKING IN WEAPONS WOULD RESULT ONLY IN DEATH AND DESTRUCTION.
YOU ARE TOO GENTLE, MRS. SCHULER. REST OF US, WE MUST DO WHAT WE CAN TO PROTECT INNOCENTS LIKE YOU.
SNORT EXCELLENT JOB *PROTECTING* US. THANKS TO YOU BLOODY IDIOTS I GET TO WEAR THIS METAL PLATE FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE.
EDUARD!
THANK YOU ALL SO MUCH FOR YOUR ***BRILLIANT*** INVENTIONS!
MORONS!
I APOLOGIZE. MY SON IS... TROUBLED.
DON'T MIND EDDIE. HE HATES EVERYTHING AND EVERYONE! I THINK HE RATHER ENJOYS IT.
HERE IS MY DAUGHTER, LIESEL.
OH! WHA' A MAGNIFICEN' WHEELCHAIR!

OH, THIS IS NO ORDINARY WHEELCHAIR! IT'S A ROLLER-CHAIR!
IT SPINS, IT DOES TRICKS! WHO WANTS TO WALK WHEN YOU CAN DO THIS!
WOW. I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THA'! WHERE DID YOU GET IT?
MOTHER BUILT IT!
GIZZT
GIZZT
TRULY? IT'S REMAR'ABLE WORK, MILENA!
I ALWAYS SAY, YOU WERE REAL GENIUS IN FAMILY.
OH, DON'T BE SILLY!
ACTUALLY, LIESEL AND I DESIGNED IT TOGETHER.
SIGH IT REMINDED ME OF MY TIME WITH ALBIE IN ZURICH, WHEN WE WERE AT UNIVERSITY.
I HAVE HOPES LIESEL WILL FOLLOW IN HER FATHER'S FOOTSTEPS. ***SHE*** IS A TRUE GENIUS.
EDUARD IS BRILLIANT TOO, BUT HE...WELL, YOU SEE HOW HE IS THESE DAYS.
WE'D BEST BE GOING. I DON'T WANT TO LOSE SIGHT OF EDUARD WHEN HE'S IN ONE OF HIS MOODS.
IT WAS VERY NICE SEEING YOU ALL AGAIN.
...HE WAS WELL LIKED. MADE A GOOD LIVING BUT NOT ENOUGH TO KILL OVER.
PEOPLE WILL KILL FOR A SHILLING.
TRUE. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE ANY OF HIS RELATIONS ARE RESPONSIBLE. I'M --
LADY MECHANIKA.
UH... YES?


I AM GWENDOLYN CAIN, OF ATHENA INDUSTRIES.
IT IS AN HONOR TO FINALLY MEET YOU. I'M A BIG ADMIRER.
THERE AREN'T MANY STRONG WOMEN WHO ARE SUCCEEDING SO WELL IN THIS MAN'S WORLD.
I'VE BEEN HOPING I MIGHT CONVINCE YOU TO COLLABORATE ON SOME PROJECTS. PERHAPS WE COULD GET LUNCH TOGETHER SOME TIME TO DISCUSS IT?
I BELIEVE YOUR MECHANICAL COMPONENTS MAY BE THE KEY TO REVOLUTIONIZING THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY.

THAT SOUNDS REMARKABLY SIMILAR TO AN OFFER I'VE HAD BEFORE FROM ONE OF YOUR COMPETITORS, LORD BLACKPOOL. HE DID NOT RESPOND WELL TO MY REFUSAL.
BELIEVE ME, LADY MECHANIKA, I AM A MUCH MORE SCRUPULOUS WEAPONS PRODUCER THAN NATHANIEL BLACKPOOL.
HAH. I AM WELL AWARE OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THAT ENCOUNTER, AS I EXPECT MOST PEOPLE ARE. THOUGH I DOUBT VERY MANY KNOW OF THE REAL REASON BEHIND HIS PROSTHETICS.
I STARTED MY BUSINESS WITH THE GOAL OF HELPING WOMEN TO PROTECT THEMSELVES. SOMETHING I HOPED YOU MIGHT HAVE SOME INTEREST IN SUPPORTING WITH YOUR UNIQUE EXPERTISE.
MY COMPANY DID GRADUALLY EXPAND INTO DESIGNING MILITARY ARMAMENTS FOR DEFENDING NOT ONLY WOMEN BUT THE ENTIRE NATION, BUT PERSONAL PROTECTION HAS ALWAYS BEEN MY PRIMARY PASSION.
I DESPISE SEEING THE WEAK EXPLOITED.
I HOPE YOU WILL CONSIDER MY PROPOSAL.
I PROMISE TO THINK ON IT.
EXCELLENT! ERNEST, GIVE THE LADY MY CONTACT INFORMATION.
I LOOK FORWARD TO SPEAKING WITH YOU FURTHER, LADY MECHANIKA. IT WAS A PLEASURE TO MEET YOU.

LADY GWENDOLYN! IF I COULD PLEASE HAVE A MOMENT...
SNKT
SNKT
SNKT
SNKT
WHOA!
LADY GWENDOLYN, I'M DETECTIVE INSPECTOR SINGH, WITH THE MECHANIKA CITY POLICE. I'M LOOKING INTO THE MURDER OF BENEN O'MEARA.
YOU'RE INVESTIGATING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIS DEATH? I WAS TOLD HE'D BEEN ASSAULTED FOR NOTHING MORE THAN THE PETTY TRIFLES THAT HE CARRIED.
I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IS THE CASE. I BELIEVE THERE WAS A MORE DEVIOUS MOTIVE BEHIND HIS MURDER.
MIGHT I HAVE A MOMENT OF YOUR TIME TO DISCUSS MR. O'MEARA AND HIS WORK? AT YOUR CONVENIENCE, OF COURSE.
YES, OF COURSE, INSPECTOR. I WILL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP. YOU CAN SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH MY ASSISTANT, ERNEST.
AND I APOLOGIZE FOR MY HANDMAIDENS. THEY CAN BE A LITTLE OVERPROTECTIVE.
LADIES, IF YOU PLEASE.
MR. DUVAL, I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW FOR DINNER AT THE LOVELACE?
I WILL BE THERE, *MADAME*. I CANNOT SAY THAT I WILL ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL, BUT I DO PROMISE TO LISTEN.
THAT IS ALL I ASK. AND MR. LEWIS!

MY OFFER TO YOU STILL STANDS AS WELL. WE COULD USE SOMEONE WITH YOUR TALENTS.
OH, I... I'M FLAT'ERED, REALLY, BUT I DON' WORK ON WEAPONS ANYMORE. I'M QUITE CONTENT TINKERIN' ON MY LITTLE CONTRAPTIONS.
HMMM. A PITY.
MR. KOVALYAV, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO TAKE A FEW MORE DAYS TO RECOVER FROM THIS DREADFUL INCIDENT. I KNOW YOU AND MR. O'MEARA HAD A LONG-STANDING FRIENDSHIP.
NO, THANK YOU, MS. CAIN, BUT I HAVE NO TIME FOR REST. I PREFER TO WORK.
VERY WELL THEN, AS YOU WISH. I'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW.
A RATHER IMPRESSIVE WOMAN, IF HER WORDS WERE SINCERE.
THEY MIGH' BE, BUT SHE CAN BE A BIT RUTHLESS HERSELF. RUMOR 'AS IT SHE STOLE A LOT OF SECRETS FROM BLACKPOOL TO START 'ER OWN COMPANY.
DID SHE? I THINK MY ADMIRATION JUST GREW A LITTLE MORE.
HER SURNAME IS CAIN? ANY RELATION TO MR. CAIN, THE ENGINEER?
E...ELIAS CAIN...HE IS... BROTHER.

THEIR MOTHER... MARRIED... BLACK...
YAROMIR, ARE YOU ALL RIGH' THERE?
UNGH... YES, YES... JUST...A LITTLE...
MON AMI?
YAROMIR!
SOMEONE CALL FOR A DOCTOR!
HE ISN'T BREATHING! I CAN'T FIND A PULSE!
IS IT AN ATTACK OF HIS HEART?
NO...
THIS WAS NO HEART ATTACK.
THIS WAS MURDER.

That evening.
Murdered, right in front of us all! How is it even possible?
Inspector Singh said it looked like someone 'ad pierced 'is heart from behind with some needle-like weapon.
It could 'ave taken several minutes before 'e even felt it, giving the killer plen'y of time to escape.
To Benen!
Sláinte!
It seems clear now Benen's death was not a mugging.
Certainly no'. It must 'ave somethin' to do with their work at Athena. Do you know what it was they were workin' on?
No, I never talked to them about their work. They were still designing weapons, and I -- like you -- want nothing to do with that anymore.
I thought maybe you 'ad changed your mind? You are meetin' with the lady Gwendolyn tomorrow, aren't you?
If she wants to buy me a meal at a fancy restaurant, who am I to say no? I only promised to listen, not to accept, eh?
Hah! Smar' man!

HEY! THERE YOU GUYS ARE! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HIDING OUT IN HERE? YOU'RE MISSING OUT ON ALL THE FUN! THE IRISH SURE KNOW HOW TO THROW A PARTY, AM I RIGHT?
MON AMI, PLEASE, WE ARE --
SO ARCHIE, I HEAR YOU KNOW THE LADY MECHANIKA, THAT YOU ACTUALLY WORK WITH HER! THAT CAN'T BE TRUE NOW, CAN IT?
THUNK!
IF YOU DON' MIND, 'ARRY--
I GOTTA TELL YOU, I WOULDN'T MIND A DAB AT THAT! A TAD ON THE FREAKY SIDE BUT HEY, I'M ADVENTUROUS! I'D LIKE TO FIND OUT JUST HOW MUCH OF HER IS MECHANICAL, KNOW WHAT I MEAN? HEHEH!
OH HO, YOU KNOW, DON'T YOU? ARCHIE KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT SHE'S GOT DOWN THERE, AM I RIGHT? AM I RIGHT?
THAT IS OVER THE LINE, MONSIEUR.
AW, COME ON GUYS. IT'S NOT LIKE SHE'S A PROPER LADY. A WOMAN GOES AROUND TOWN DRESSED LIKE THAT SHE'S JUST ASKING FOR--

POW
YOU... YOU...
GO HOME, HARRY. YOU'VE CLEARLY HAD TOO MUCH TO DRINK.
UNGH...
FINALLY! IT IS ABOUT TIME SOMEONE DID THAT!
KLNK

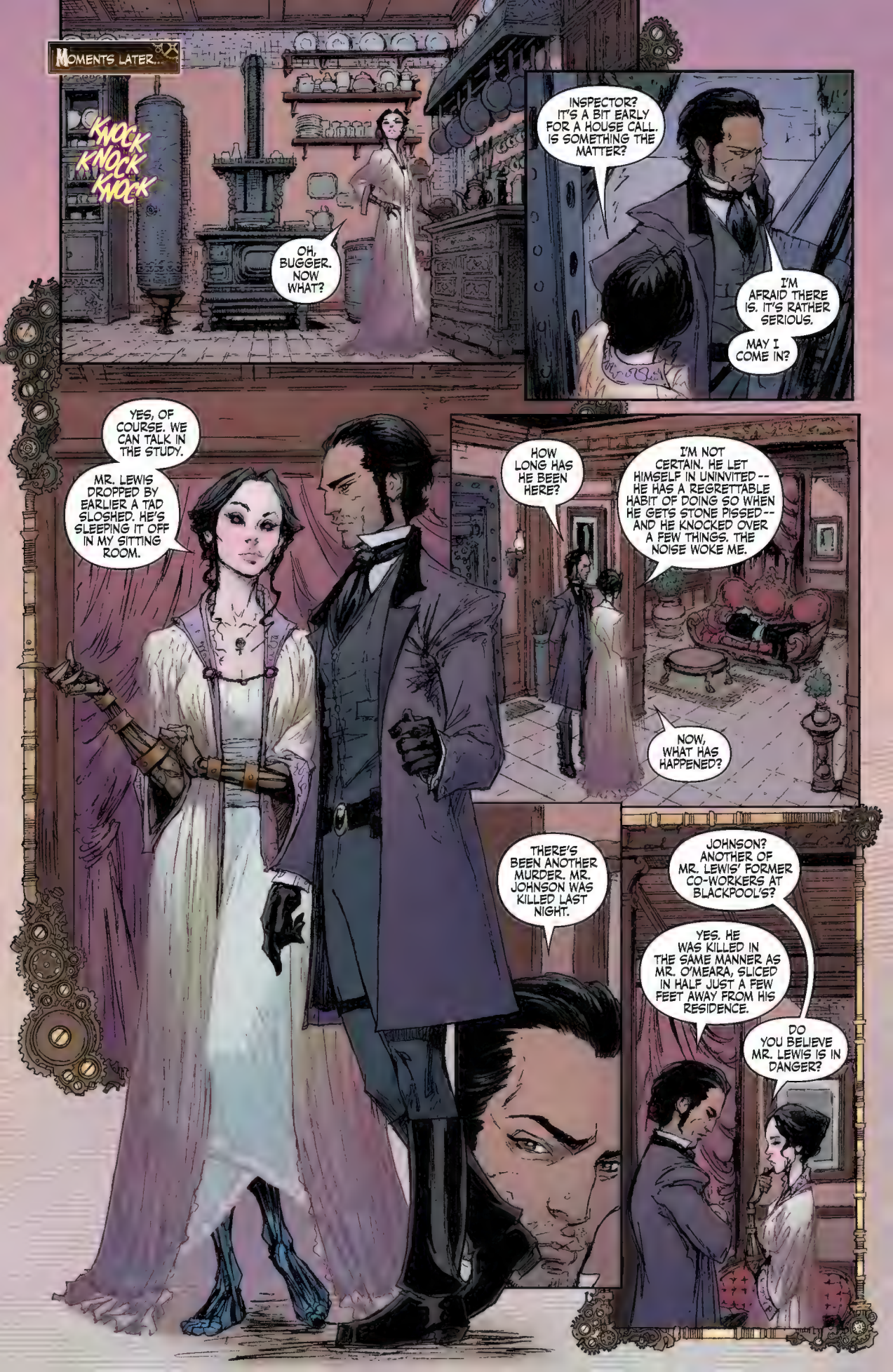
WHO DOES HE THINK HE IS?
I'M HAROLD LEE JAW-AW-AWWWW... WHOA!
OOOF!
WHA--
OH HEY THERE, SUGAR PIE!
YOU LOOKING FOR A GOOD TIME?
SHNK
WHUH... NO, NO, NO, NOOO--
SHNK
SPLAT

THE MAN WAS SLICED IN HALF.
YOU COULD DO IT.
YOU COULD DO IT...
YOU COULD DO IT...
YOU'RE NO HEROINE... YOU'RE A COLD-BLOODED MECHANICAL KILLER.
WHAT WOULD YOUR ADORING PUBLIC THINK OF THEIR BELOVED, MECHANICAL DARLING IF THEY KNEW THE REAL YOU?
YOU AREN'T EVEN HUMAN.
DEMON-CURSED! SHE WILL BRING MISFORTUNE UPON US ALL!

YOU DID IT!
YOU KILLED HER!
YOU KILLED HER!
YOU'RE JUST LIKE US.
A KILLER.
I RECOGNIZE MY OWN.
YOU'RE DEAD, MECHANIKA...
SHNK
>GASP!<

GASP
CRASH!
THUMP
BLOODY HELL?
CLK
THUMP PRM THUMP
HNNGG...
WHO'S THERE?
...NNHHGN... DEAD...

MR. LEWIS?!
WHAT THE BLOODY HELL ARE YOU DOING HERE THIS TIME OF NIGHT?!
...DEAD...
WHAT?
THEY'RE ALL DEAD... BECAUSE OF ME...;SOB(
...MY FAULT...
IT WAS ALL...MY... FAULT....
COME ALONG, MR. LEWIS... EVERYTHING IS ALL RIGHT NOW. I'VE GOT YOU.
I KILLED 'EM ALL...;SOB(...I KILLED 'EM... ;SOB(
JUST SLEEP.
PLOP
EVERYTHING WILL BE BETTER IN THE MORNING.
I KILLED... zzzzzzzzz


MOMENTS LATER...
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
OH, BUGGER. NOW WHAT?
INSPECTOR? IT'S A BIT EARLY FOR A HOUSE CALL. IS SOMETHING THE MATTER?
I'M AFRAID THERE IS. IT'S RATHER SERIOUS.
MAY I COME IN?
YES, OF COURSE. WE CAN TALK IN THE STUDY.
MR. LEWIS DROPPED BY EARLIER A TAD SLOSHED. HE'S SLEEPING IT OFF IN MY SITTING ROOM.
HOW LONG HAS HE BEEN HERE?
I'M NOT CERTAIN. HE LET HIMSELF IN UNINVITED -- HE HAS A REGRETTABLE HABIT OF DOING SO WHEN HE GETS STONE PISSED -- AND HE KNOCKED OVER A FEW THINGS. THE NOISE WOKE ME.
NOW, WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER MURDER. MR. JOHNSON WAS KILLED LAST NIGHT.
JOHNSON? ANOTHER OF MR. LEWIS' FORMER CO-WORKERS AT BLACKPOOL'S?
YES. HE WAS KILLED IN THE SAME MANNER AS MR. O'MEARA, SLICED IN HALF JUST A FEW FEET AWAY FROM HIS RESIDENCE.
DO YOU BELIEVE MR. LEWIS IS IN DANGER?

ARE THE... MR. SINGH, WHAT IS IT?
THERE WAS A WITNESS.
THE WITNESS SAYS HE SAW YOU KILL MR. JOHNSON.
WELL, INSPECTOR...
I SUPPOSE THERE'S ONLY ONE THING TO DO UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES.
AND WHAT MIGHT THAT BE?
WHAT?
HE SAW ME?
HAVE A SPOT OF TEA, OF COURSE. WOULD YOU CARE FOR A CUP?
I SUSPECT THIS MIGHT TAKE A WHILE...

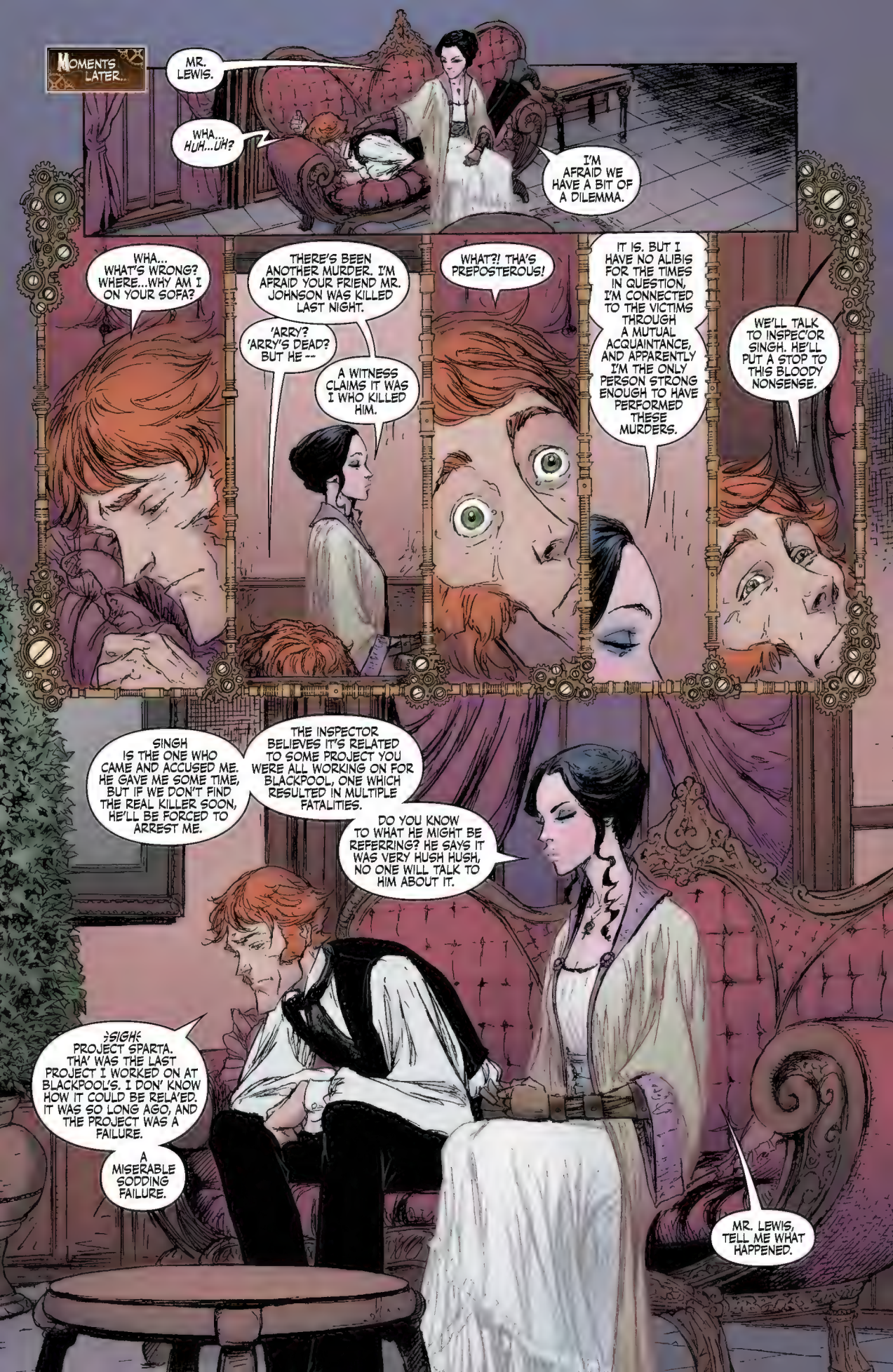
Chapter Two

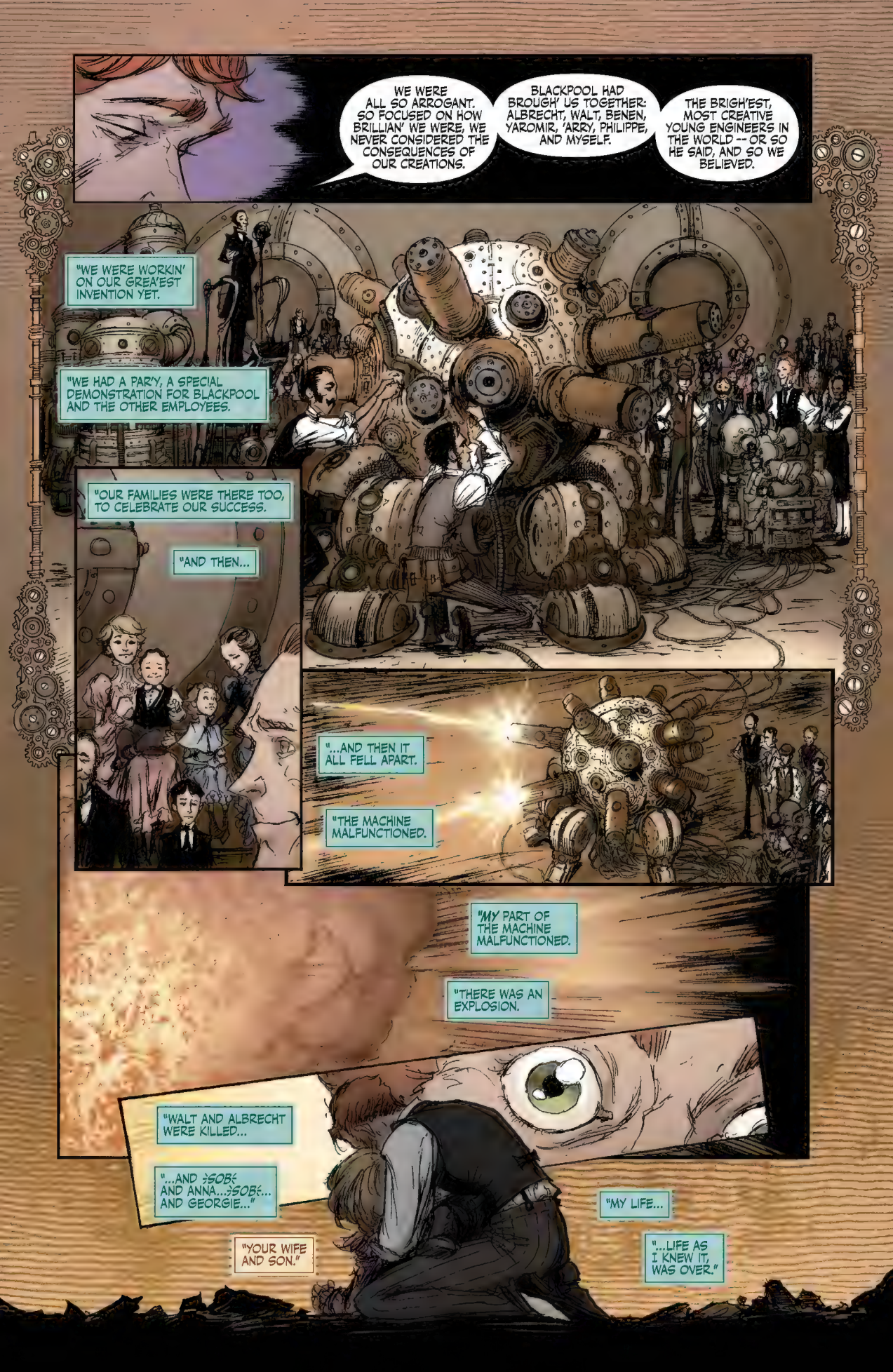
SO...YOU HAVE A WITNESS WHO CLAIMS HE SAW ME KILL MR. JOHNSON?

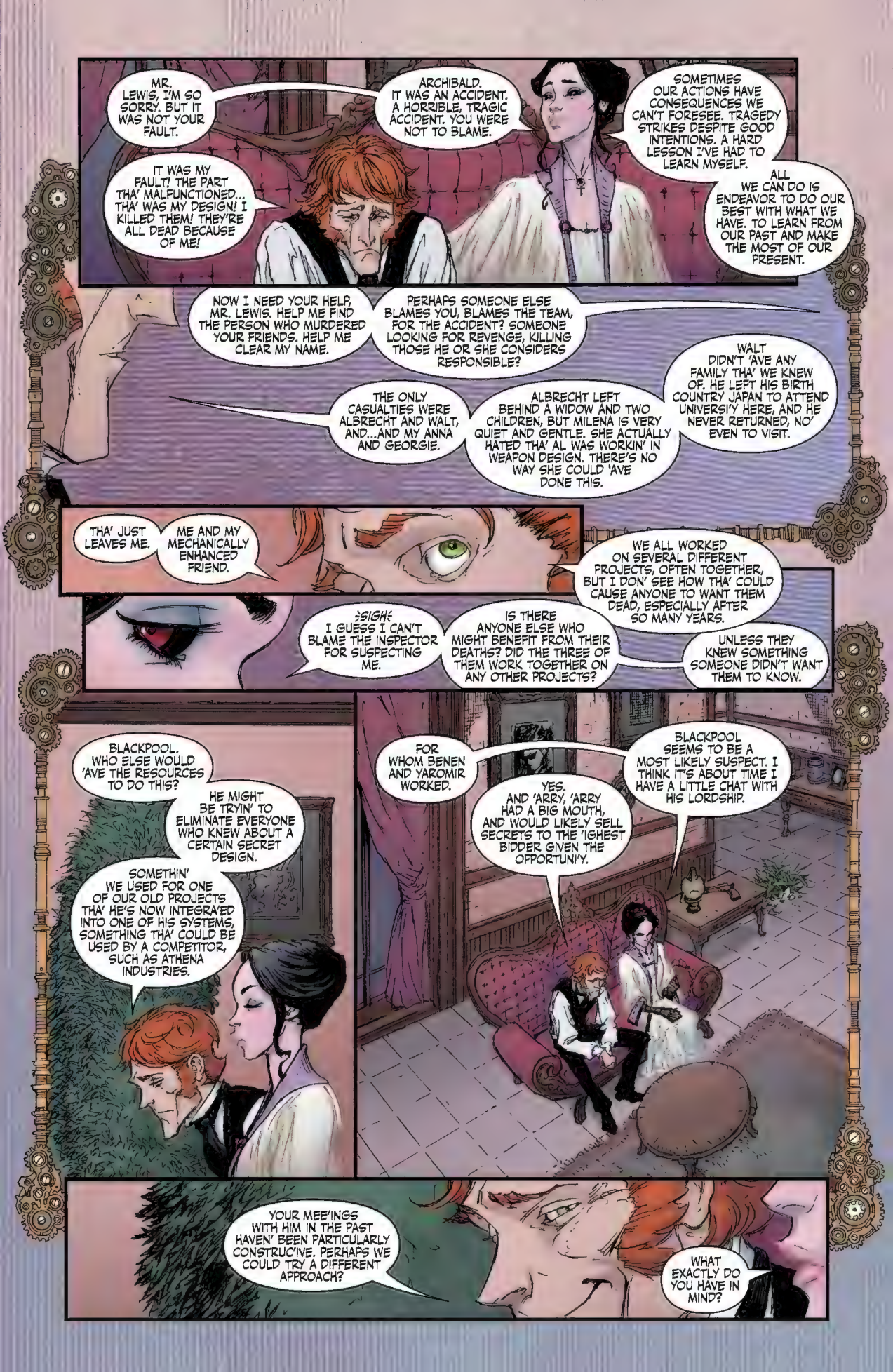
THE WITNESS DECLARED ADAMANTLY THAT HE SAW YOU, LADY MECHANIKA, THE MECHANICAL HUNTRESS, SLICE MR. JOHNSON IN HALF.
IS THAT SO? WHO IS THIS WITNESS, AND HOW DRUNK WAS HE?
JOHNSON'S NEIGHBOR. HE SAW THE MURDER AS IT OCCURRED OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW...AND HE WAS DEAD SOBER.
BUT I QUESTIONED HIM FURTHER MYSELF.
HE ADMITTED HE NEVER SAW THE KILLER'S FACE, ONLY THAT SHE APPEARED TO HAVE BLADES SHOOT OUT OF HER ARMS AND WALKED WITH WHAT HE CONSIDERED A "MECHANICAL AFFECTATION."
"MECHANICAL AFFECTATION?"
THAT DESCRIPTION COULD APPLY TO PRACTICALLY ANYONE. IT MAY EVEN HAVE BEEN A MAN FOR ALL WE KNOW.
BE THAT AS IT MAY, I DO NEED TO ASK FOR YOUR WHEREABOUTS LAST NIGHT.
I WAS HERE.
ALONE?
UNTIL MR. LEWIS LET HIMSELF IN, YES. I REALLY OUGHT TO CONSIDER CHANGING MY LOCKS.
AND THE NIGHT MR. O'MEARA WAS KILLED?
WHAT WAS THAT, FIVE OR SIX NIGHTS AGO? THE SAME, MOST LIKELY. I'M USUALLY HOME ALONE DURING THE EVENINGS, UNLESS I'M WORKING A CASE. I ENJOY MY PRIVACY.
YOU DIDN'T GO OUT FOR DINNER? OR VISIT A FRIEND?
I DON'T THINK SO.
YOU DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE I AM THE KILLER, DO YOU?

BLOODY HELL, YOU DO!
YOU BELIEVE I AM THE ASSASSIN!
I HAVE TO FOLLOW THE EVIDENCE. YOU HAD THE MEANS, THE OPPORTUNITY, AND YOU'RE CONNECTED TO THE VICTIMS.
ADD THE WITNESS'S STATEMENT, EVEN THOUGH IT ISN'T A DEFINITIVE IDENTIFICATION, THE CHIEF INSPECTOR WILL BE PUSHING FOR YOUR ARREST. AND SOON.
YOU NEED TO TELL ME IF YOU HAD ANYTHING TO DO WITH THIS, ANYTHING YOU KNOW. I CAN HELP YOU.
I MUST SAY, INSPECTOR, I AM GREATLY... PERTURBED... THAT YOU THINK ME CAPABLE OF MURDER.
OF THE INNOCENT, NO. I WOULD NEVER BELIEVE THAT OF YOU.
BUT OF THE GUILTY? TO PROTECT SOMEONE YOU CARE ABOUT, OR TO ATTAIN JUSTICE WHEN ALL OTHER OPTIONS HAVE FAILED? YES, I THINK YOU QUITE CAPABLE.
I DON'T CONDEMN YOU FOR IT! I WOULD DO THE SAME!
WHEN I WAS A BOY, SOMEONE MURDERED MY MOTHER. EVERYONE KNEW WHO HAD DONE IT, BUT HE WAS A WEALTHY CRIME LORD. HE OWNED THE LOCAL POLICE.
THERE WAS ABSOLUTELY NOTHING I COULD DO TO ATTAIN JUSTICE FOR HER. I WOULD HAVE KILLED HIM THEN, IF I COULD. BUT I WAS JUST A BOY, FROM THE LOWEST CASTE. NO MONEY, NO CONNECTIONS, NO VOICE. I WAS UTTERLY POWERLESS.
BY THE TIME I WAS IN A POSITION TO POSSIBLY DO SOMETHING, A NEW CRIME LORD HAD TAKEN OVER, THE MURDERER HAD GONE INTO HIDING.
TO THIS DAY, I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO FIND HIM, THOUGH I'VE NEVER STOPPED LOOKING.
AND WHEN YOU DO FIND HIM, INSPECTOR, WHAT THEN? WILL *YOU* KILL HIM?

YES. WITH THE HELP OF THE LAW. IF HE EVER RESURFACES, HE WILL BE TRIED, CONVICTED, AND EXECUTED FOR HIS CRIMES.
NOW LET ME HELP YOU. TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT THESE MURDERS. YOU CAN TRUST ME.
I THOUGHT I COULD.
WHETHER YOU KILLED THEM OR NOT, MECHANIKA, I AM YOUR FRIEND. I'LL DO WHATEVER I CAN TO HELP.
I DIDN'T KILL THEM, INSPECTOR.
THEY WERE MR. LEWIS'S OLD FRIENDS, FORMER CO-WORKERS AT BLACKPOOL ARMAMENTS. THAT'S ALL I KNOW. I HADN'T EVEN MET ANY OF THEM UNTIL THE FUNERAL.
THEY WERE ALL WORKING TOGETHER ON SOMETHING, SOME SECRET PROJECT FOR BLACKPOOL. NO ONE WILL TELL ME ANYTHING ABOUT IT, BUT I KNOW IT ENDED IN SEVERAL FATALITIES, INCLUDING LEWIS'S WIFE AND CHILD.
WERE THEY?
I'VE NEVER HEARD MENTION OF ANY SECRET PROJECT. MR. LEWIS'S FAMILY WAS KILLED IN AN ACCIDENT.
WHAT IF LEWIS DISCOVERED THAT IT WASN'T AN ACCIDENT?
NOW YOU'RE ACCUSING MR. LEWIS?
THIS IS MY JOB, MECHANIKA. MY DUTY! I MUST CONSIDER ALL THE POSSIBLE SCENARIOS.
WHATEVER LEWIS AND HIS FRIENDS WERE WORKING ON, WHATEVER THEY'RE HIDING, THAT'S THE KEY TO THIS CASE. I'M SURE OF IT.
HE'LL TALK TO ME. ESPECIALLY IF IT WILL HELP CLEAR MY NAME --AS WELL AS HIS-- AND FIND THE REAL KILLER.
WILL YOU ALLOW ME TO QUESTION HIM?
YOU'LL PROMISE TO TELL ME WHATEVER YOU LEARN? EVEN IF IT IMPLICATES HIM?
YOU CAN TRUST ME.


MOMENTS LATER...
MR. LEWIS.
WHA... HUH...ÜH?
I'M AFRAID WE HAVE A BIT OF A DILEMMA.
WHA... WHAT'S WRONG? WHERE...WHY AM I ON YOUR SOFA?
THERE'S BEEN ANOTHER MURDER. I'M AFRAID YOUR FRIEND MR. JOHNSON WAS KILLED LAST NIGHT.
'ARRY? 'ARRY'S DEAD? BUT HE --
A WITNESS CLAIMS IT WAS I WHO KILLED HIM.
WHAT?! THA'S PREPOSTEROUS!
IT IS. BUT I HAVE NO ALIBIS FOR THE TIMES IN QUESTION, I'M CONNECTED TO THE VICTIMS THROUGH A MUTUAL ACQUAINTANCE, AND APPARENTLY I'M THE ONLY PERSON STRONG ENOUGH TO HAVE PERFORMED THESE MURDERS.
WE'LL TALK TO INSPEC'OR SINGH. HE'LL PUT A STOP TO THIS BLOODY NONSENSE.
SINGH IS THE ONE WHO CAME AND ACCUSED ME. HE GAVE ME SOME TIME, BUT IF WE DON'T FIND THE REAL KILLER SOON, HE'LL BE FORCED TO ARREST ME.
THE INSPECTOR BELIEVES IT'S RELATED TO SOME PROJECT YOU WERE ALL WORKING ON FOR BLACKPOOL, ONE WHICH RESULTED IN MULTIPLE FATALITIES.
DO YOU KNOW TO WHAT HE MIGHT BE REFERRING? HE SAYS IT WAS VERY HUSH HUSH, NO ONE WILL TALK TO HIM ABOUT IT.
;SIGH: PROJECT SPARTA. THA' WAS THE LAST PROJECT I WORKED ON AT BLACKPOOL'S. I DON' KNOW HOW IT COULD BE RELA'ED. IT WAS SO LONG AGO, AND THE PROJECT WAS A FAILURE.
A MISERABLE SODDING FAILURE.
MR. LEWIS, TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED.


WE WERE ALL SO ARROGANT. SO FOCUSED ON HOW BRILLIAN' WE WERE, WE NEVER CONSIDERED THE CONSEQUENCES OF OUR CREATIONS.
BLACKPOOL HAD BROUGH' US TOGETHER: ALBRECHT, WALT, BENEN, YAROMIR, 'ARRY, PHILIPPE, AND MYSELF.
THE BRIGH'EST, MOST CREATIVE YOUNG ENGINEERS IN THE WORLD -- OR SO HE SAID, AND SO WE BELIEVED.
"WE WERE WORKIN' ON OUR GREA'EST INVENTION YET.
"WE HAD A PAR'Y, A SPECIAL DEMONSTRATION FOR BLACKPOOL AND THE OTHER EMPLOYEES.
"OUR FAMILIES WERE THERE TOO, TO CELEBRATE OUR SUCCESS.
"AND THEN...
"...AND THEN IT ALL FELL APART.
"THE MACHINE MALFUNCTIONED.
"MY PART OF THE MACHINE MALFUNCTIONED.
"THERE WAS AN EXPLOSION.
"WALT AND ALBRECHT WERE KILLED...
"...AND ;SOB; AND ANNA...;SOB;... AND GEORGIE..."
"YOUR WIFE AND SON."
"MY LIFE...
"...LIFE AS I KNEW IT, WAS OVER."


MR. LEWIS, I'M SO SORRY. BUT IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT.
ARCHIBALD. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT. A HORRIBLE, TRAGIC ACCIDENT. YOU WERE NOT TO BLAME.
SOMETIMES OUR ACTIONS HAVE CONSEQUENCES WE CAN'T FORESEE. TRAGEDY STRIKES DESPITE GOOD INTENTIONS. A HARD LESSON I'VE HAD TO LEARN MYSELF.
IT WAS MY FAULT! THE PART THA' MALFUNCTIONED... THA' WAS MY DESIGN! I KILLED THEM! THEY'RE ALL DEAD BECAUSE OF ME!
ALL WE CAN DO IS ENDEAVOR TO DO OUR BEST WITH WHAT WE HAVE. TO LEARN FROM OUR PAST AND MAKE THE MOST OF OUR PRESENT.
NOW I NEED YOUR HELP, MR. LEWIS. HELP ME FIND THE PERSON WHO MURDERED YOUR FRIENDS. HELP ME CLEAR MY NAME.
PERHAPS SOMEONE ELSE BLAMES YOU, BLAMES THE TEAM, FOR THE ACCIDENT? SOMEONE LOOKING FOR REVENGE, KILLING THOSE HE OR SHE CONSIDERS RESPONSIBLE?
WALT DIDN'T 'AVE ANY FAMILY THA' WE KNEW OF. HE LEFT HIS BIRTH COUNTRY JAPAN TO ATTEND UNIVERSI'Y HERE, AND HE NEVER RETURNED, NO' EVEN TO VISIT.
THE ONLY CASUALTIES WERE ALBRECHT AND WALT, AND...AND MY ANNA AND GEORGIE.
ALBRECHT LEFT BEHIND A WIDOW AND TWO CHILDREN, BUT MILENA IS VERY QUIET AND GENTLE. SHE ACTUALLY HATED THA' AL WAS WORKIN' IN WEAPON DESIGN. THERE'S NO WAY SHE COULD 'AVE DONE THIS.
THA' JUST LEAVES ME.
ME AND MY MECHANICALLY ENHANCED FRIEND.
WE ALL WORKED ON SEVERAL DIFFERENT PROJECTS, OFTEN TOGETHER, BUT I DON' SEE HOW THA' COULD CAUSE ANYONE TO WANT THEM DEAD, ESPECIALLY AFTER SO MANY YEARS.
>SIGH< I GUESS I CAN'T BLAME THE INSPECTOR FOR SUSPECTING ME.
IS THERE ANYONE ELSE WHO MIGHT BENEFIT FROM THEIR DEATHS? DID THE THREE OF THEM WORK TOGETHER ON ANY OTHER PROJECTS?
UNLESS THEY KNEW SOMETHING SOMEONE DIDN'T WANT THEM TO KNOW.
BLACKPOOL. WHO ELSE WOULD 'AVE THE RESOURCES TO DO THIS?
HE MIGHT BE TRYIN' TO ELIMINATE EVERYONE WHO KNEW ABOUT A CERTAIN SECRET DESIGN.
SOMETHIN' WE USED FOR ONE OF OUR OLD PROJECTS THA' HE'S NOW INTEGRA'ED INTO ONE OF HIS SYSTEMS, SOMETHING THA' COULD BE USED BY A COMPETITOR, SUCH AS ATHENA INDUSTRIES.
FOR WHOM BENEN AND YAROMIR WORKED.
BLACKPOOL SEEMS TO BE A MOST LIKELY SUSPECT. I THINK IT'S ABOUT TIME I HAVE A LITTLE CHAT WITH HIS LORDSHIP.
YES. AND 'ARRY, 'ARRY HAD A BIG MOUTH, AND WOULD LIKELY SELL SECRETS TO THE 'IGHEST BIDDER GIVEN THE OPPORTUNI'Y.
YOUR MEE'INGS WITH HIM IN THE PAST HAVEN' BEEN PARTICULARLY CONSTRUC'IVE. PERHAPS WE COULD TRY A DIFFERENT APPROACH?
WHAT EXACTLY DO YOU HAVE IN MIND?

"WE INFILTRA'E HIS DOWNTOWN OFFICE."
"AND HOW EXACTLY DO YOU PROPOSE WE MANAGE THAT?"
"LOVE, I'M THE BRAINS OF THIS OPERATION. YOU'RE THE BRAWN."
SECTOR AG SECURE. RETURNING TO BASE.
ACKKSSSHHHH KNOWLEDGED CRICKET ZZZZ ELEVEN. SEE YOU SOON HSSHHH.
PARDON ME, MR. POLICEMAN...
I AIN'T NO BLOODY COPPER. BUGGER OFF!
BUT SIR, I NEED YOUR HELP!
ARE YOU--
POW
"SIGH: YES. I SUPPOSE I AM."
VRRRRRRRRR
VRRRRRRR

"THE HARD PART WILL BE GET'ING INSIDE THE BUILDING.
"BLACKPOOL KEEPS A HEAVY SECURI'Y PATROL AROUND THE OUTER PERIME'ER AS WELL AS MULTIPLE SECURI'Y CHECKS INSIDE."
HOLD THE LIFT!
OY, WHA' FLOOR MATE?
TOP STOREY, PLEASE.
TOP STOREY? THIS IS A SERVICE LIFT, MATE. IT DOESN'T GO PAST THE TENTH.
WAIT A MINUTE, WHY WOULD A CRICKET 'AVE ANY BUSINESS ON THE TOP FLOOR?
THAT IS NONE OF YOUR CONCERN.
OY! ARE YOU A BLEEDIN' WOMAN? SINCE WHEN DO WE HIRE...
BUGGER THIS.
SHORTLY...
RUBBISH CHUTE SHOULD SUIT NICELY FOR YOU.
WHA... WHAT THE... OY!
UNGH...

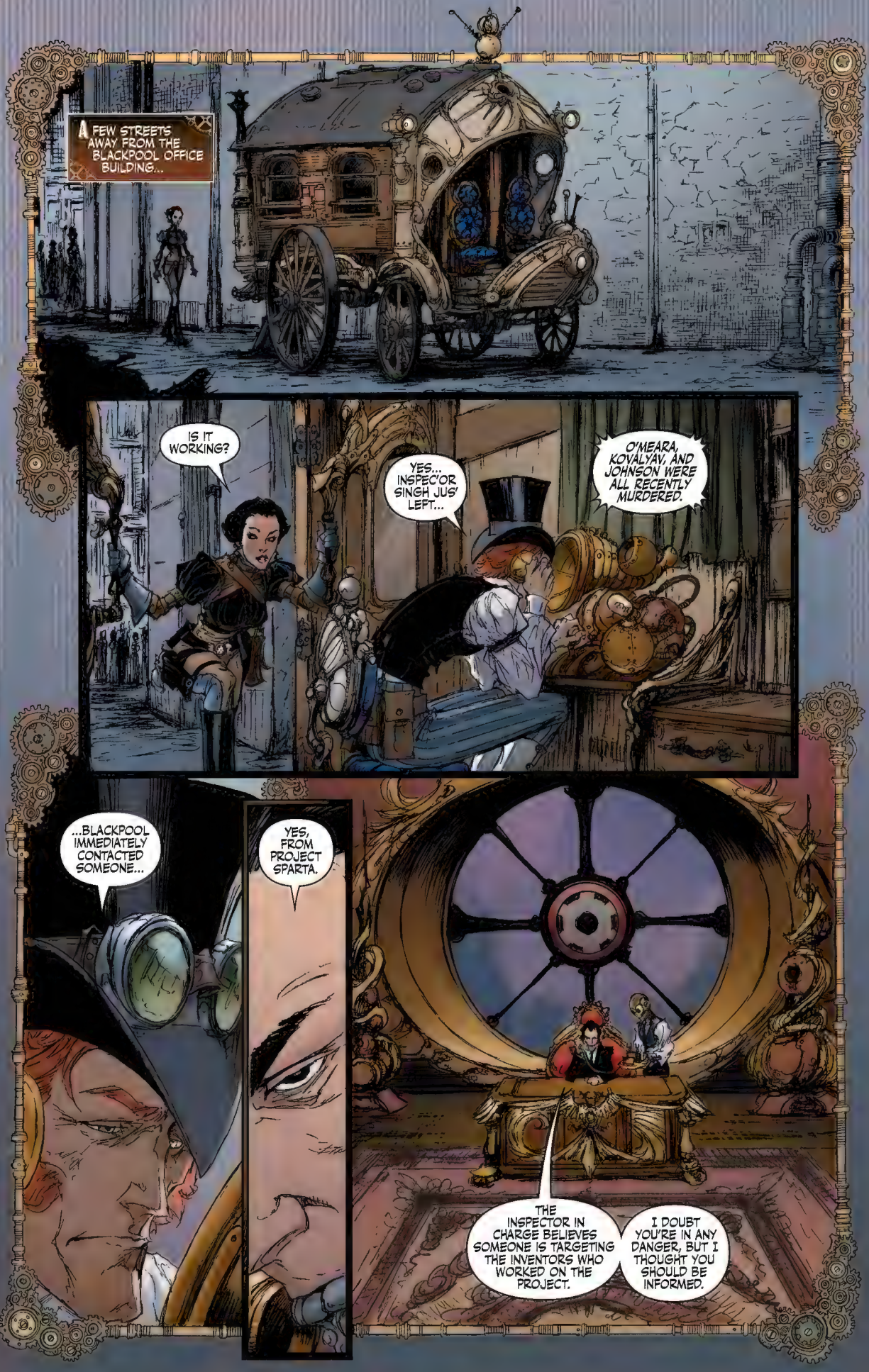
"MAYBE WE COULD ENLIST INSPEC'OR SINGH TO PROVIDE A DISTRACTION."
TIME FOR A NAP, MATE!
THUMP
BOLLOCKS! MY MASK!
"WELL, HE DID JUST ACCUSE ME OF MULTIPLE MURDERS. I'D SAY HE OWES ME ONE."
LORD BLACKPOOL, DETECTIVE INSPECTOR SINGH OF THE MECHANIKA CITY POLICE.
THANK YOU. YOU MAY LEAVE US.
YES, SIR.
INSPECTOR SINGH. HOW MAY I BE OF ASSISTANCE?
THANK YOU FOR SEEING ME, LORD BLACKPOOL. I'M INVESTIGATING THE MURDERS OF BENEN O'MEARA, YAROMIR KOVALYAV, AND HAROLD JOHNSON.
WHO... HAROLD? HAROLD JOHNSON IS DEAD? WHEN DID THIS HAPPEN? WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD ANYTHING ABOUT IT?
HE WAS KILLED LAST NIGHT. I UNDERSTAND ALL OF THE VICTIMS WERE EMPLOYED BY YOU AT ONE TIME?
YES, BUT ONLY MR. JOHNSON WORKS FOR ME NOW. THE OTHERS LEFT BLACKPOOL ARMAMENTS YEARS AGO.
YOU BELIEVE THE MURDERS ARE RELATED? SURELY IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME OR MY COMPANY.
THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO DETERMINE. WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT PROJECT SPARTA?

"ONCE YOU'RE INSIDE THE BUILDING, YOU JUST NEED TO GET NEAR BLACKPOOL'S OFFICE ON THE TOP FLOOR."
"OH, IS THAT ALL?"
KLK KLK KLK
WHAT DO YOU THINK THE POLICE WANT WITH LORD BLACKPOOL?
KLK KLK KLK
DO YOU THINK HIS LORDSHIP HAS DONE SOMETHING... CRIMINAL?
KLK KLK
KLK KLK KLK
JUST MIND YOUR OWN, MATE. YOU'LL LAST LONGER HERE...
"YOU DON' NEED TO ACTUALLY GET INSIDE. AN ADJACENT ROOM WOULD SUFFICE, OR BET'ER YET, OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW."

"OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW? SURE...NO PROBLEM."
PROJECT SPARTA...I HAVEN'T HEARD OF THAT IN YEARS.
ALL THREE VICTIMS WERE INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT, YES?
"AND WHAT MIRACULOUS FEAT WILL YOU EXPECT ME TO PERFORM ONCE I MAKE MY WAY UP THERE?"
"NOTHIN' YOU CAN' HANDLE."
THEY WERE, BUT THE PROJECT WAS A FAILURE AND SHUT DOWN.
I HEARD THERE WAS AN ACCIDENT, SEVERAL PEOPLE WERE KILLED.
YES, UNFORTUNATELY. TWO OF MY MOST BRILLIANT INVENTORS, AS WELL AS A FEW CIVILIANS.
IT WAS A TRAGIC DAY FOR BLACKPOOL ARMAMENTS. REST ASSURED, OUR SAFETY PRECAUTIONS ARE MUCH MORE RIGOROUS NOW.
"I'VE BEEN WORKIN' ON A NEW INVENTION, I CALL IT THE LEWIS AETHER SONIC SPY.
"IT DETECTS SOUNDS AND THEN TRANSMITS THEM VIA AETHER WAVES TO A RECEIVIN' MACHINE LOCA'ED UP TO A KILOME'ER AWAY."
"I DON'T NEED TO KNOW THE TECHNICAL DETAILS, MR. LEWIS. ARE YOU SAYING WE CAN USE YOUR DEVICE TO SPY ON BLACKPOOL AND SECRETLY RECORD HIS CONVERSATIONS?"
"THA'S EXACTLY WHAT I'M SAYIN'.
"ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS PLACE THE SPY OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW AND ACTIVA'E IT."
CAN YOU THINK OF ANYONE WHO MIGHT WANT TO HARM MR. JOHNSON OR YOUR FORMER EMPLOYEES? PERHAPS SOMEONE ELSE WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT, OR WAS AFFECTED BY THE ACCIDENT?
HMMM. YOU MAY WANT TO SPEAK WITH ARCHIBALD C. LEWIS. HE WORKED ON THE PROJECT AS WELL, AND HIS FAMILY WAS KILLED IN THE ACCIDENT.
HE MAY BLAME THE OTHERS FOR IT, AND I HEAR HE'S BEEN KEEPING COMPANY WITH RATHER UNSAVORY CHARACTERS OF LATE.

"AND OF COURSE, IT WOULD HELP IF YOU COULD GE' AWAY WITHOUT ANYONE NOTICIN' YOUR TRESPASS."
AGAIN?
YES, AGAIN. YOU TWO HAVE THIS LEVEL. GET TO IT!
THE COMMANDER WANTS A FULL SECURITY SWEEP.
BOLLOCKS!
"OF COURSE..."
YES, SIR!
NOWHERE TO HIDE.
BUGGER IT...

MR. FALL?
UMPH... THAT WAS GRACEFUL.
EXECUTED WITH ALL THE POISE OF A PROPER LADY!
MR. FARTHINGSWORTH THE SECOND!
YES, MY LORD?
FETCH ME THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMUNICATOR.
OF COURSE, MY LORD.
GOOD EVENING. PLEASE CONNECT ME TO SPECTRE WORKS, LEVEL THIRTEEN.
WALTER. WE MAY HAVE A PROBLEM.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, LORD BLACKPOOL.
OF COURSE, INSPECTOR. FEEL FREE TO CALL ON ME IF YOU NEED ANYTHING ELSE.


A FEW STREETS AWAY FROM THE BLACKPOOL OFFICE BUILDING...
IS IT WORKING?
YES... INSPEC'OR SINGH JUS' LEFT...
O'MEARA, KOVALYAV, AND JOHNSON WERE ALL RECENTLY MURDERED.
...BLACKPOOL IMMEDIATELY CONTACTED SOMEONE...
YES, FROM PROJECT SPARTA.
THE INSPECTOR IN CHARGE BELIEVES SOMEONE IS TARGETING THE INVENTORS WHO WORKED ON THE PROJECT.
I DOUBT YOU'RE IN ANY DANGER, BUT I THOUGHT YOU SHOULD BE INFORMED.

NO, NO ONE EVEN KNOWS ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH SPARTA. BUT YOU MAY WANT TO TAKE PRECAUTIONS, JUST IN CASE.
NOW, HOW IS YOUR CURRENT PROJECT COMING ALONG? WERE YOU ABLE TO COME UP WITH A SOLUTION FOR THE PROBLEM WITH THE ANALYTIC ENGINE?
DID WE --
YES, WE'RE LISTENING IN ON BLACKPOOL NOW...
GOOD, GOOD. I'LL LET YOU GET BACK TO YOUR WORK.
WHO THE BLOODY 'ELL IS WALTER?
BLACKPOOL CONTACTED THIS BLOKE AFTER YOU LEFT, WARNED HIM THA' SOMEONE WAS MURDERIN' THE INVEN'ORS FROM PROJECT SPARTA.
BUT I 'AVE NO IDEA WHO THE 'ELL HE WAS TALKING TO!
WASN'T THERE A WALTER WHO WORKED ON YOUR TEAM?
THERE WAS HISATO HINOTORI. HE STARTED USIN' THE NAME WALT AFTER TOO MANY PEOPLE SAID "WHAT" WHEN HE INTRODUCED HIMSELF.
BUT IT'S NO' HIM. WALT WAS KILLED IN THE ACCIDENT.
PERHAPS AN ADMINISTRATOR WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES, OR SOMEONE WHO SECRETLY TOOK OVER AFTER THE PROJECT WAS OFFICIALLY SHUT DOWN.
POSSIBLY. WHOEVER IT WAS, BLACKPOOL WAS WARNIN' HIM ABOUT THE MURDERS, WARNED HIM THA' HE MIGHT BE IN DANGER TOO.
SOUNDS LIKE BLACKPOOL MAY ACTUALLY HAVE NAUGH' TO DO WITH THIS.
THAT WAS MY IMPRESSION AS WELL, BASED ON MY CONVERSATION WITH HIM.
UNLESS HE'S AN EXCEPTIONALLY GIFTED LIAR, BLACKPOOL KNEW NOTHING OF THE MURDERS.

MAYBE IT HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THEIR WORK AT BLACKPOOL'S.
BUT IF HE DIDN'T DO IT, WHO DID? WHO ELSE STANDS TO GAIN FROM THESE MEN'S DEATHS?
THA' WAS THEIR ONLY COMMON CONNECTION. NO ONE ASSOCIA'ED WITH 'ARRY OUTSIDE OF WORK. SAD TO SAY, HE WAS A BIT OF A GOBSHITE.
IF IT IS ABOUT SPARTA, OR SOME OTHER PROJECT YOU WORKED ON, YOU AND THE REST OF THE TEAM MAY BE IN DANGER.
I... PHILIPPE. WE NEED TO WARN PHILIPPE.
DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE LIVES?
I DO. HE WAS ON MY LIST OF POTENTIAL SUSPECTS.
I DON' THINK HE'S HOME. HE AGREED TO MEET WITH LADY CAIN TODAY FOR DINNER.
WHERE?

"THE LOVELACE."
I AM AFRAID LADY GWENDOLYN AND HER GUEST JUST DEPARTED.
HOW FAR AWAY IS MR. DUVAL'S HOME?
NOT FAR. HE WOULD LIKELY WALK IT.
LET'S GO.
TWO OF THE VICTIMS WERE KILLED AT NIGHT, ON THEIR WAY HOME.
THE KILLER LIKELY KNOWS WHERE THEY LIVE AND LIES IN WAIT.
THERE'S MR. DUVAL AND...
THAT WOMAN! THE ASSASSIN!
HONK HONK HONK
SHINK SHINK
MR. DUVAL!!!
DUVAL! DUVAL! LOOK OUT!!

WHA--?!
OOF!
UNGH!
SNKKT
UNNATURALLY STRONG AND... FLEXIBLE.
KRACK
WHAM
ARE YOU MECHANICALLY ENHANCED AS WELL?

POW
WHAT THE...
WHERE DO YOU THINK YOU'RE...
...GOING!

WHOOSH
HOW...?

SHE GO' AWAY?
I'M AFRAID SO.
SHE LOOKED LIKE SHE MIGHT 'AVE MECHANICAL COMPONENTS TOO, JUST LIKE YOU.
NO. NOT LIKE ME. SHE WAS FASTER THAN ME, STRONGER THAN ME, AND THE WAY SHE MOVED...
I DON'T THINK SHE WAS HUMAN AT ALL.
I THINK WE'RE DEALING WITH A FULLY CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN.

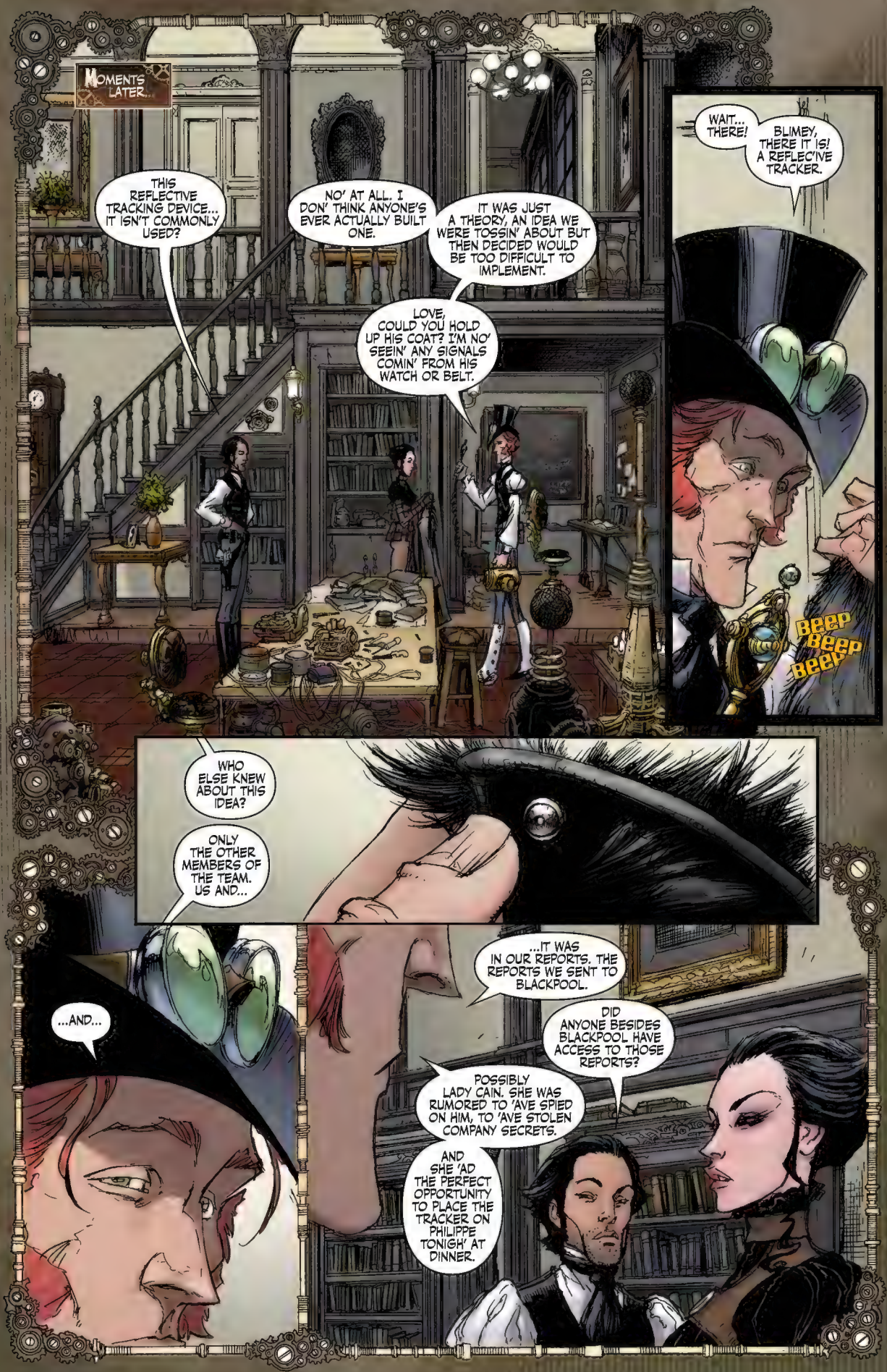
Chapter Three

MR. DUVAL WILL BE FINE.

THE CUT WAS DEEP, BUT IT'LL HEAL. HE JUST NEEDS TO REST FOR A FEW DAYS. NO UNNECESSARY MOVEMENTS THAT COULD REOPEN THE WOUND.
I'LL STOP BY AGAIN TOMORROW TO CHECK ON HIM.
THANK YOU FOR COMING SO QUICKLY AND AT THIS LATE HOUR, DR. LITTLETON.
OH, NO! NO, NO, NO...I CAN'T ACCEPT ANY PAYMENT FOR THIS SMALL FAVOR! NOT FROM YOU!
YOU... YOU'RE A HERO! AND A...A FRIEND, IF YOU DON'T MIND ME SAYING SO.
OF COURSE, DOCTOR. THANK YOU.
YOU ARE ALWAYS WELCOME TO CALL ON ME WHENEVER YOU NEED, LADY MECHANIKA. ANY TIME AT ALL.
INSPECTOR. MR. LEWIS.

AN AUTOMATON THAT CAN PASS FOR HUMAN! *SA ALORS!* IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE.
SURELY WE WOULD HAVE HEARD OF SUCH A THING IF IT WAS IN DEVELOPMENT.
PERHAPS IT ISN'T SCIENCE. COULD IT BE MAGIC? POSSIBLY GOLEM MAGIC?
INSPECTOR SINGH, WHATEVER HAPPENED TO DURRANT'S LABORATORY, HIS RESEARCH?*
*SEE THE LOST BOYS OF WEST ABBEY
IT WAS ALL DESTROYED, AS WAS THE GOLEM. AND THE SORCERER, THE SERVANT OF MOLOCH, WAS HANGED.
COULD SOMEONE ELSE BE CONTINUING THEIR WORK?
WE FOUND NO EVIDENCE THAT ANYONE ELSE KNEW ABOUT THEIR EXPERIMENTS.
THE SORCERER GUARDED HIS METHODS COVETOUSLY. HE KEPT METICULOUS NOTES ON ALL HIS RESEARCH BUT OMITTED ANY DETAILS ON THE ACTUAL RITUALS.
I BELIEVE HIS SECRETS DIED WITH HIM.
MR. LEWIS, I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE TRAVELED THE WORLD ATTENDING SCIENCE AND INDUSTRY CONVENTIONS. WHO HAS THE RESOURCES TO CREATE AN AUTOMATON WITH THESE CAPABILITIES?
UH... NO ONE. THIS IS FAR MORE ADVANCED THAN ANYTHIN' I'VE EVER SEEN OR 'EARD OF.
THE BLACKPOOL BUTLER IS THE BEST AUTOMATON IN THE MARKET, BUT IT NEITHER LOOKS NOR MOVES LIKE A HUMAN. NO' EVEN CLOSE.
AND IT IS NOT ONLY THE ANTHROPOMORPHIC FEATURES. DESIGNING A MACHINE TO KILL, TO FIND A SPECIFIC TARGET AMONG A CROWD OF PEOPLE -- THIS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH.
HOW MIGHT YOU DO IT, MR. DUVAL? IF YOU WERE TASKED WITH DESIGNING SUCH A THING?
EUH... YOU COULD PERHAPS PLACE A TRANSMITTER ON THE TARGET, SOMETHING THAT WOULD SEND A SIGNAL TO THE AUTOMATON.
COULD SUCH A TRANSMITTER HAVE BEEN PLACED ON THE VICTIMS?

NO' BLOODY LIKELY, NO' WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE. THE POWER SOURCE ALONE WOULD BE AT LEAST 'ALF A FOOT SQUARE.
HMMM... BUT WHAT IF IT USED A PASSIVE APPROACH? A DEVICE DESIGNED TO REFLECT A SIGNAL ORIGINATING FROM THE AUTOMATON?
REMEMBER, WE CONSIDERED IT FOR BLACKPOOL'S INTERNAL TRACKING SYSTEM? I THINK IT WAS YAROMIR'S IDEA, OR WAS IT ALBRECHT'S?
IT WAS AL, I REMEMBER. AND YOU'RE RIGH', THE AUTOMATON COULD BE USIN' A REFLEC'IVE TRACKER TO LOCATE IT'S TARGETS.
INSPECTOR, DID YOU FIND ANY MECHANICAL DEVICES ON THE VICTIMS?
NO, WE FOUND NOTHING OF THE SORT, NOTHING OUT OF THE ORDINARY.
AH, BUT THAT IS THE BEAUTY OF USING A REFLECTIVE TRACKER.
THE DEVICE CAN BE TINY, IT COULD CONCEIVABLY BE AS SMALL AS A WATCH. IT COULD BE HIDDEN INSIDE A WATCH EVEN.
PHILIPPE, MIGHT YOU 'AVE AN AETHER WAVE TRANSCEIVER LYIN' ABOUT? WE COULD TEST YOUR CLOTHING, EVERYTHING YOU WERE WEARIN' TONIGH', SEE IF IT DETECTS A REFLEC'IVE SIGNAL.
YES, OF COURSE, IN MY WORKSHOP DOWNSTAIRS. I'LL GO AND--
MR. DUVAL, THE DOCTOR SAID YOU SHOULDN'T MOVE UNNECESSARILY.
STAY UP HERE. MR. LEWIS CAN BRING YOUR THINGS AND TEST THEM.

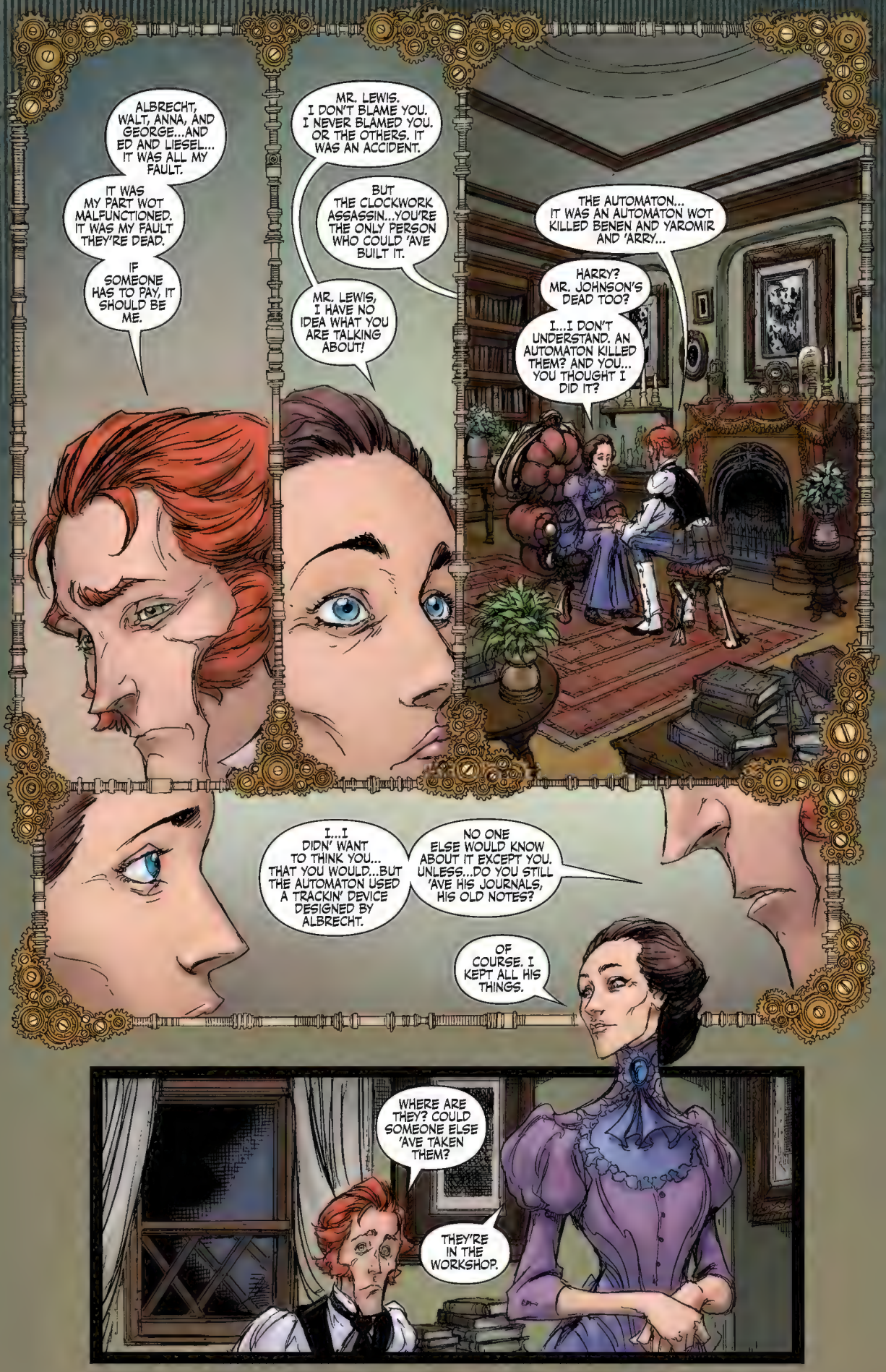

MOMENTS LATER...
THIS REFLECTIVE TRACKING DEVICE... IT ISN'T COMMONLY USED?
NO' AT ALL. I DON' THINK ANYONE'S EVER ACTUALLY BUILT ONE.
IT WAS JUST A THEORY, AN IDEA WE WERE TOSSIN' ABOUT BUT THEN DECIDED WOULD BE TOO DIFFICULT TO IMPLEMENT.
LOVE, COULD YOU HOLD UP HIS COAT? I'M NO' SEEIN' ANY SIGNALS COMIN' FROM HIS WATCH OR BELT.
WAIT... THERE!
BLIMEY, THERE IT IS! A REFLEC'IVE TRACKER.
Beep Beep Beep
WHO ELSE KNEW ABOUT THIS IDEA?
ONLY THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM. US AND...
...AND...
...IT WAS IN OUR REPORTS. THE REPORTS WE SENT TO BLACKPOOL.
DID ANYONE BESIDES BLACKPOOL HAVE ACCESS TO THOSE REPORTS?
POSSIBLY LADY CAIN. SHE WAS RUMORED TO 'AVE SPIED ON HIM, TO 'AVE STOLEN COMPANY SECRETS.
AND SHE 'AD THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE THE TRACKER ON PHILIPPE TONIGH' AT DINNER.

"I HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH LADY CAIN IN THE MORNING. WE'LL SEE WHAT SHE HAS TO SAY..."
INSPECTOR SINGH AND...LADY MECHANIKA. THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE.

LADY MECHANIKA IS ASSISTING ME ON THE CASE.
I SEE. HAVE THERE BEEN ANY NEW DEVELOP-MENTS?
YES. THE ASSASSIN ATTACKED MR. DUVAL LAST NIGHT.
WHAT?! BUT I SAW HIM LAST NIGHT, HE WAS FINE!
HE IS FINE, BUT HE WAS ATTACKED ON HIS WAY HOME AFTER YOUR APPOINTMENT.
I INTERRUPTED THE KILLER AND FOUGHT WITH HER. ONLY IT WASN'T A HER, IT WAS AN AUTOMATON.
AN AUTOMATON! ARE YOU CERTAIN? AND THIS AUTOMATON EXECUTED THE OTHERS AS WELL?
HOW IS THAT EVEN POSSIBLE?
WE WERE HOPING YOU COULD TELL US.
YOU THINK I HAVE AN AUTOMATON WITH SUCH CAPABILITIES? TRUST ME, INSPECTOR, IF I DID, EVERYONE WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT AND IT WOULD BE MAKING ME A FORTUNE.
AND I WOULD HAVE DESIGNED IT TO PERFORM MUCH MORE PRODUCTIVE FUNCTIONS THAN ASSASSINATIONS. HOUSEHOLD CHORES, MENIAL TASKS AND HAZARDOUS JOBS...THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS.
NO, I'M AFRAID WE DON'T HAVE ANYTHING OF THE SORT HERE AT ATHENA INDUSTRIES, THOUGH I'D VERY MUCH LIKE TO SPEAK WITH THE PERSON WHO DID CREATE IT.
I CAN'T EVEN BEGIN TO IMAGINE HOW IT COULD BE DONE.
A SMALL AETHER WAVE REFLECTOR HAD BEEN PLANTED ON MR. DUVAL. AND I FOUND SIMILAR DEVICES HIDDEN AMONG THE PERSONAL EFFECTS OF THE OTHER VICTIMS.
MR. DUVAL AND MR. LEWIS BELIEVE THESE WERE TRACKING DEVICES USED BY THE AUTOMATON TO LOCATE ITS TARGETS.
REALLY? HOW...INTERESTING. A REFLECTIVE AETHER WAVE TARGETING SYSTEM... INGENIOUS.

YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF SUCH A SYSTEM?
NO, I CAN'T SAY I HAVE, UNFORTUNATELY.
RUMOR HAS IT YOU STOLE SEVERAL SECRETS FROM BLACKPOOL WHEN YOU STARTED YOUR COMPANY.
OH, I KNEW EVERYTHING THERE WAS TO KNOW ABOUT NATHANIEL'S LITTLE PROJECTS, BUT I WOULDN'T SAY I EVER STOLE ANYTHING.
DID THIS INNOVATIVE IDEA ORIGINATE AT BLACKPOOL'S, BACK THEN? IS THAT WHY MY ENGINEERS WERE MURDERED?
YOU SAID YOU KNEW ABOUT ALL OF THEIR PROJECTS BUT YOU DON'T REMEMBER HEARING ABOUT THIS ONE?
NO, AND I WOULD HAVE REMEMBERED. I READ ALL OF NATHANIEL'S REPORTS, AND SUCH A DEVICE WAS NEVER MENTIONED.
MR. LEWIS SAID IT WAS AN IDEA THEY CONSIDERED WHILE WORKING ON SOME TRACKING SYSTEM, BUT THEY NEVER ACTUALLY TRIED TO IMPLEMENT IT.
AH, I SEE. THEN IT'S UNLIKELY IT WAS EVER WRITTEN UP IN ANY REPORTS SENT TO NATHANIEL.
IF THEY WROTE A REPORT ON EVERY SINGLE THEORETICAL IDEA THEY HAD, HE'D HAVE BEEN BURIED IN A MOUNTAIN OF PAPERWORK WITHIN A WEEK.
BUT MR. LEWIS SAID...
YES, HE DID.
INSPECTOR, WE NEED TO GO. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME, LADY CAIN.
WHERE ARE WE GOING?
MR. LEWIS MUST HAVE KNOWN THAT NEITHER CAIN NOR BLACKPOOL KNEW ABOUT THIS IDEA. HE WAS TRYING TO PROTECT THE ONE OTHER PERSON WHO DID.
AND WHO WOULD THAT BE?

SCHULER RESIDENCE
OH, MR. LEWIS! HOW NICE OF YOU TO STOP BY!
I WAS JUST ABOUT TO HAVE SOME TEA AND BISCUITS. I'LL GO FETCH YOU A CUP...
MILENA. I KNOW.
MILENA, I NEED TO SPEAK WITH YOU.
OF COURSE, COME IN.
PARDON? WHAT DO YOU KNOW?
I KNOW ABOUT THE AUTOMATON. THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN.
CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN? MR. LEWIS, WHAT ON EARTH ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
I DON' BLAME YOU, BUT THIS HAS TO STOP.
THE OTHERS, IT WASN' THEIR FAULT.


ALBRECHT, WALT, ANNA, AND GEORGE...AND ED AND LIESEL... IT WAS ALL MY FAULT.
IT WAS MY PART WOT MALFUNCTIONED. IT WAS MY FAULT THEY'RE DEAD.
IF SOMEONE HAS TO PAY, IT SHOULD BE ME.
MR. LEWIS. I DON'T BLAME YOU. I NEVER BLAMED YOU. OR THE OTHERS. IT WAS AN ACCIDENT.
BUT THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN...YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD 'AVE BUILT IT.
MR. LEWIS, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT!
THE AUTOMATON... IT WAS AN AUTOMATON WOT KILLED BENEN AND YAROMIR AND 'ARRY...
HARRY? MR. JOHNSON'S DEAD TOO?
I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND. AN AUTOMATON KILLED THEM? AND YOU... YOU THOUGHT I DID IT?
I...I DIDN' WANT TO THINK YOU... THAT YOU WOULD...BUT THE AUTOMATON USED A TRACKIN' DEVICE DESIGNED BY ALBRECHT.
NO ONE ELSE WOULD KNOW ABOUT IT EXCEPT YOU. UNLESS...DO YOU STILL 'AVE HIS JOURNALS, HIS OLD NOTES?
OF COURSE. I KEPT ALL HIS THINGS.
WHERE ARE THEY? COULD SOMEONE ELSE 'AVE TAKEN THEM?
THEY'RE IN THE WORKSHOP.

THE CHILDREN AND I USE THIS WORKSHOP ON OUR PROJECTS BUT NO ONE ELSE COMES IN HERE. EXCEPT THE DAY MAID EVERY NOW AND THEN, WHEN IT GETS TOO DUSTY.
ALL OF ALBIE'S NOTES AND UNFINISHED WORK ARE STILL HERE. I KNOW IT'S TERRIBLY SILLY BUT I FIND IT COMFORTING TO HAVE THEM AROUND. ALMOST AS THOUGH...AS IF...
YES.
AS IF THERE'S A LIT'LE BIT OF HIM LEFT BEHIND.
THAT'S ODD. THE BOX WITH ALBIE'S JOURNALS ISN'T HERE.
I MUST HAVE PUT IT SOMEWHERE...
IS IT POSSIBLE YOUR MAID STOLE IT? MAYBE SOLD IT TO AN ENGINEERING FIRM?
NO, NO. SHE WOULD NEVER DO ANYTHING LIKE THAT. ALBIE AND I HIRED HER OURSELVES, SHORTLY AFTER PURCHASING THE HOUSE. SHE'S LIKE FAMILY.

MAYBE LIESEL WAS STUDYING THE JOURNALS.
SHHHK
SHE HAS ASPIRATIONS TO BE AN INVENTOR LIKE HER FATHER, YOU KNOW. AND THERE ARE SO MANY MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN THESE DAYS, ESPECIALLY HERE IN MECHANIKA CITY.
EDUARD COULD DO GREAT THINGS TOO, IF HE WOULD JUST APPLY HIMSELF.
HE'S REALLY QUITE BRIGHT, BUT HE INSISTS ON GOING THROUGH THIS REBELLIOUS STAGE...
MILENA...
...IT'S SIMPLY IMPOSSIBLE TO REASON WITH HIM...
WHAT IS THIS?
HMMM? OH, THAT'S EVE.

I WAS DESIGNING IT TO BE A COMPANION FOR LIESEL. TO FETCH HER THINGS, CARRY HER, PUSH HER WHEELCHAIR.
WE STOPPED WORKING ON IT WHEN LIESEL CAME UP WITH THE IDEA FOR HER ROLLER CHAIR.
MILENA...
HMMM... THE POWER SHOULDN'T BE TURNED ON. LIESEL MUST HAVE FORGOTTEN TO--
MILENA!
THIS IS THE CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN!

WHAT? OH, DON'T BE SILLY. EVE ISN'T OPERATIONAL. WE COULDN'T GET IT TO WALK PROPERLY...
IT MOST CER'AINLY IS OPERATIONAL! THIS IS THE AUTOMATON WOT KILLED BENEN, AND YAROMIR, AND 'ARRY!
THAT'S JUST NOT POSSIBLE.
MILENA, I SAW IT! I SAW THIS THING ATTACK PHILIPPE! IT TRIED TO KILL HIM!
NO, NO...YOU'RE MISTAKEN...IT ISN'T...
LOVE, I'M NO' MISTAKEN. I WAS THERE. I SAW IT WITH MY OWN EYES!
COULD LIESEL OR EDUARD 'AVE--
NO! LEAVE THEM OUT OF THIS! THEY WOULD NEVER...
THERE... THERE HAS TO BE SOME MISTAKE...
THEY WOULDN'T...THEY COULDN'T...
MILENA, IT'S ALRIGH'. IT'LL BE ALRIGH'. NO ONE ELSE NEEDS TO KNOW. WE CAN GET THEM HELP...
WHAT ARE *YOU* DOING HERE?

GET OUT OF OUR HOME! HAVEN'T YOU DONE ENOUGH ALREADY?
WHAT IS IT, MOTHER? WHAT HAS HE DONE TO UPSET YOU NOW?
EDUARD... LIESEL...TELL HIM, TELL MR. LEWIS IT ISN'T TRUE.
TELL HIM YOU HAVEN'T ACTIVATED EVE. THAT YOU DIDN'T DIRECT IT TO...TO...
WE DID, NOT THAT IT'S ANY OF HIS BUSINESS. IT WAS GOING TO BE A SURPRISE, A SURPRISE FOR YOU! BUT HE HAD TO RUIN THAT TOO.
WE DID IT, MOTHER! WE FIXED EVE! IT CAN WALK, PICK THINGS UP...IT MOVES JUST LIKE A HUMAN!
OH, EDUARD... HOW COULD YOU? HOW COULD YOU KILL THREE MEN IN COLD BLOOD? I DIDN'T RAISE YOU TO DO VIOLENCE!
KILL? WHAT? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? I NEVER KILLED ANYONE!
LEAVE ED ALONE! IT WAS ME! I DID IT! I HAD THEM EXECUTED. ED DIDN'T KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT IT.
LIESEL?
EXECUTED! WHAT IS GOING ON HERE?

ONCE WE FIXED EVE, I KNEW IT WAS THE ANSWER, THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING.
I EQUIPPED EVE WITH BLADES AND WAITED. WHEN WE SAW O'MEARA AT LUNCH, I HID THE TRACKER ON HIS COAT. THE OTHERS I GOT AT THE FUNERAL.
THEN I INSTRUCTED EVE TO GO OUT AND DO WHAT NEEDED TO BE DONE. TO GIVE US JUSTICE!
IT WASN'T RIGHT.
IT WASN'T RIGHT THAT THEY WERE LIVING HAPPILY EVER AFTER, WINNING ACCOLADES, GETTING RICH...THIS ONE WAS EVEN WORKING WITH A FAMOUS ADVENTURER, BEING CALLED A HERO!
THEIR LIVES WERE ALL GOING SWIMMINGLY, WHILE OURS WERE IN SHAMBLES. THEY DIDN'T CARE, DIDN'T REMEMBER, DIDN'T PAY FOR WHAT THEY DID.
JUSTICE? YOU...YOU KILLED MR. O'MEARA? AND MR. KOVALYAV?
LIESEL... I ALWAYS REMEMBERED. EVERY DAY I REMEMBER...
THEN WHERE WERE YOU?
WHERE WERE YOU WHEN FATHER WAS GONE AND MOTHER SPENT EVERY NIGHT CRYING HERSELF TO SLEEP?
OH LIESEL...
WHERE WERE YOU WHEN THE OTHER CHILDREN AT SCHOOL WERE TORMENTING ED ABOUT THE METAL PLATE IN HIS HEAD?
AND WHERE WERE YOU WHEN I WAS TRAPPED AT HOME, COULDN'T EVEN GO TO SCHOOL, COULDN'T WALK OUTSIDE, COULDN'T USE THE WATER CLOSET WITHOUT SOMEONE HELPING ME?
LIESEL, I'M SORRY...I'M SO SORRY...
LIESEL, I NEVER WANTED THIS. I NEVER BLAMED MR. LEWIS OR THE OTHERS FOR YOUR FATHER'S DEATH. IT WAS JUST AN ACCIDENT.
IT WASN'T JUST AN ACCIDENT! THEY NEED TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS!
WE DO, I DO. YOU'RE RIGH', WE SHOULD 'AVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL. I SHOULD 'AVE BEEN MORE CAREFUL.
IF YOU WERE ALL SO BRILLIANT, HOW COULD YOU LET THIS HAPPEN?
WHY DIDN'T YOU TEST YOUR STUPID WAR MACHINE? WHY DID YOU HAVE TO HAVE US ALL THERE WHEN YOU DEMONSTRATED IT?
GOOD!
KICK
WE DID... WE THOUGH' WE DID. I DON' KNOW WHAT WENT WRONG...
IF I COULD TAKE IT BACK, I WOULD. IF I COULD TRADE PLACES WITH THEM, I WOULD!
IF MY DEATH COULD MAKE IT RIGH', LIESEL, I WOULD GLADLY GIVE IT.

BZZZZZ
POP
POP
ZZZZZZZZ
LIESEL, STOP THIS! PLEASE! THIS ISN'T THE ANSWER!
SHINK
WHY CONFRONT HER HIMSELF? HE COULD BE PUTTING HIMSELF IN DANGER.
HE BLAMES HIMSELF FOR THE ACCIDENT, FOR THE DEATHS OF HIS FAMILY AND MRS. SCHULER'S HUSBAND.
I KNOW MR. LEWIS. HE WOULD FEEL THAT MRS. SCHULER IS JUSTIFIED IN HER ACTIONS -- THAT HE DESERVES WHATEVER SHE WISHES TO SEND HIS WAY.
MEANWHILE..
KNOCK KNOCK KNOCK
IF MR. LEWIS SUSPECTED THAT MRS. SCHULER CREATED THIS CLOCKWORK ASSASSIN, WHY WOULDN'T HE LET US KNOW?

GO, MR. LEWIS! RUN! SAVE YOUR--
HUH... UH...UH...
UNGH... NOOO...
SHNIKT
AROUND BACK!
MOTHER!
WHAT WAS THAT?
SHUT IT DOWN! SHUT IT DOWN! MOTHER'S HURT!
NO... MOTHER... MOTHER JUST GOT IN THE WAY!
EVE WON'T LET ANYTHING STOP IT THIS TIME. BUT IT WON'T HURT MOTHER, IT WON'T HURT ANYONE AS LONG AS WE STAY AWAY FROM LEWIS!
HNGH...
KRASH

TNK

BLAM BLAM

TNK

TNK

TNK

BULLETS AREN'T STOPPING IT!

HELP MR. LEWIS!

BLAM

BLAM

THUNK

COME ON, LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE...

MR. LEWIS!

MILENA... GO HELP... MILENA!

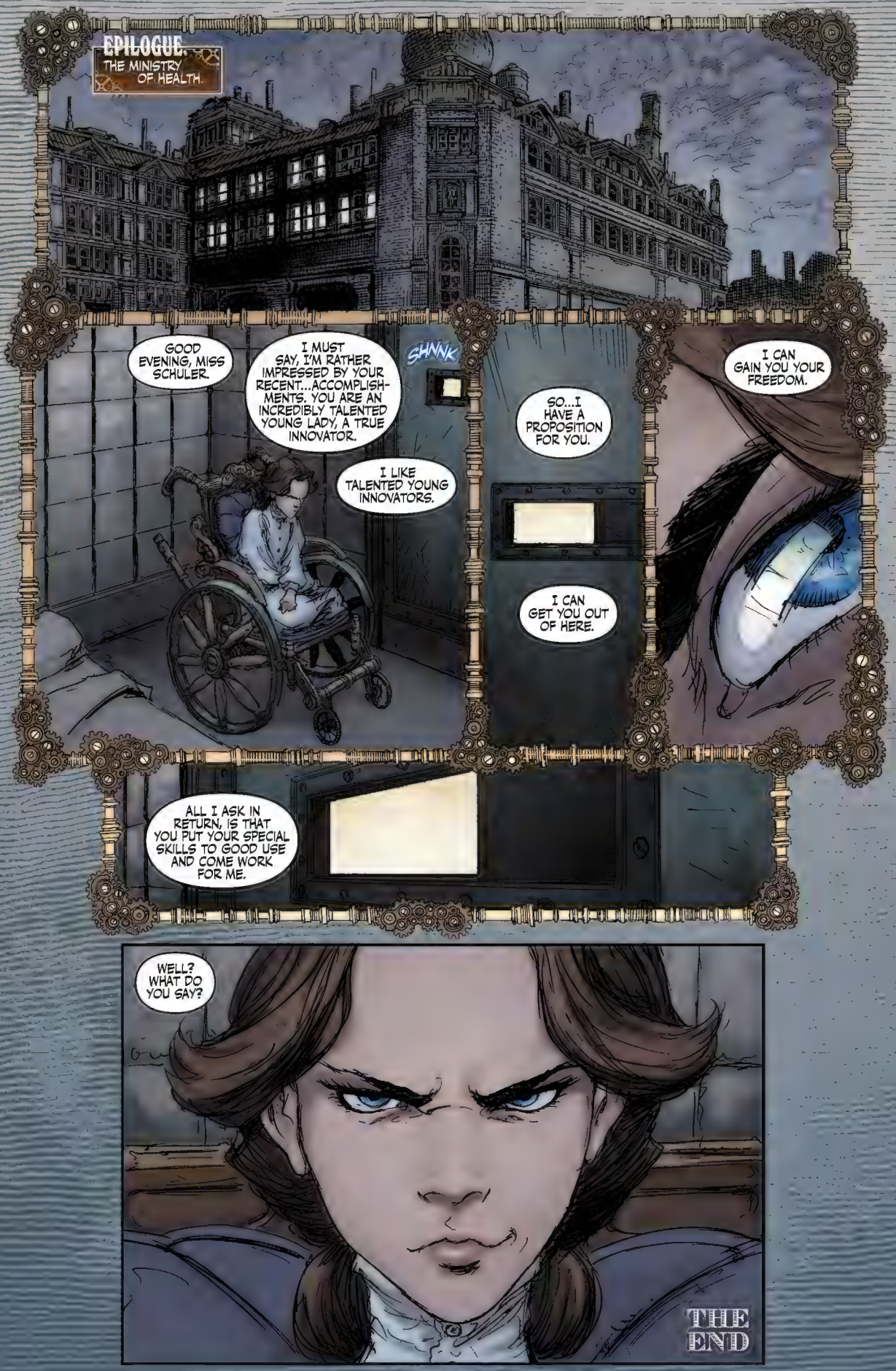
BEHIND YOU!

KLANK
RUN LEWIS, RUN!
GET YOUR ARSE OUT OF HERE!
ARGH!
CRASH
HMMMFF!
IT'S TOO...BLOODY... STRONG...
OOOMPH!
THUD
AAHHHH!

AAAAHHH!
SNK
SNK
GZZLT
UNGH!
HOW DO YOU...SHUT THIS THING... DOWN!
POWER...
UNGH!
GZZ GZZT GZZ
HMP!
IF I COULD JUST... REACH...ITS HEAD...
...POWER PORT...LEFT SIDE...

SHNK
THERE!
FZZZ
FZZZ
WELL DONE, MR. LEWIS!
IS IT OVER?
I BELIEVE SO, YES.
HOW IS...MILENA... IS SHE... ALRIGH'?
I'M SORRY, MR. LEWIS. SHE LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD.
WHERE'S HER SON? WAS HE INVOLVED IN THE MURDERS?
NO... EDUARD HAD NOTHIN' TO DO WITH IT. NEITHER DID... MILENA.
BUT... THEN WHO DID? WHO BUILT THIS AUTOMATON?
IT WAS...

THE DAUGHTER.
NOOOOO!
IT ISN'T RIGHT! IT ISN'T FAIR!
}GASP{
WHY DOES HE GET TO LIVE! WHY?! WHY!!
FATHER IS DEAD BUT HE GETS TO LIVE! NO! IT'S NOT FAIR! IT'S NOT FAIR!!!
YOU DID THIS!
YOU KILLED MY FATHER! YOU TOOK MY LEGS! YOU DESTROYED MY LIFE!
NO! IT ISN'T RIGHT! NOOOOO!
NO. IT ISN'T FAIR. IT ISN'T RIGHT.
BUT KILLING HIM WON'T MAKE IT RIGHT. IT WON'T BRING THEM BACK. IT WON'T BRING YOU BACK.
IT WILL ONLY LEAVE YOU...EMPTY.
NO... NO...}SOB{... NO...
ONLY YOU CAN MAKE IT RIGHT, ONLY YOU CAN LET IT GO.
ONLY THEN CAN YOU FIND...
...PEACE...


EPILOGUE.
THE MINISTRY OF HEALTH.
GOOD EVENING, MISS SCHULER.
I MUST SAY, I'M RATHER IMPRESSED BY YOUR RECENT...ACCOMPLISHMENTS. YOU ARE AN INCREDIBLY TALENTED YOUNG LADY, A TRUE INNOVATOR.
I LIKE TALENTED YOUNG INNOVATORS.
SHNNK
SO...I HAVE A PROPOSITION FOR YOU.
I CAN GAIN YOU YOUR FREEDOM.
I CAN GET YOU OUT OF HERE.
ALL I ASK IN RETURN, IS THAT YOU PUT YOUR SPECIAL SKILLS TO GOOD USE AND COME WORK FOR ME.
WELL? WHAT DO YOU SAY?
THE END

Cover Gallery

variant cover by Joe Benitez & Peter Steigerwald

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& PETER STEIGERWALD

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Lady Mechanika *(The Mystery of the Mechanical Corpse)*
The Tablet of Destinies
The Lost Boys of West Abbey
The Clockwork Assassin
La Belle Dame sans Merci *(Collected Edition Coming 2019)*

La Dama de la Muerte *(Day of the Dead Special)*

Lady Mechanika: Steampunk Coloring Book I
Lady Mechanika: Steampunk Coloring Book II

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*2017 Diamond Gem Award Nominee for Comic Book of the Year**

Joe Benitez's Lady Mechanika™

A series of brutal murders compels Lady Mechanika's associate Mr. Lewis to confront the ghosts of his past. But the mechanical huntress herself becomes involved when an eyewitness places her at the scene of the crime, forcing even her former ally Detective Inspector Singh to consider: is Lady Mechanika a crime fighting hero…or a cold blooded killer?

Set in a fictionalized steampunk Victorian England, a time when magic and superstition clashed with new scientific discoveries and inventions, LADY MECHANIKA chronicles a young woman's obsessive search for her identity after a mad scientist's horrific experiments left her with mechanical limbs and no memory of her past.

"This, as well as all the previous Lady Mechanika stories, belong in every collector's cache. The story is a page turner and the visuals the envy of all other books. This earns my highest possible recommendation."

– SciFi Pulse

This volume collects the fourth story in the LADY MECHANIKA series, *The Clockwork Assassin,* along with a gorgeous cover art gallery.

**Lady Mechanika: The Clockwork Assassin #1* was nominated for 2017 Comic Book of the Year in the $3.99 or Under category by Diamond Comic Distributors

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